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Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of the sea

Report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

Letter dated 7 September 2018 from the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole addressed to the President of the General Assembly

We have the honour to transmit to you the attached report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, which met at United Nations Headquarters on 23 and 24 August 2018 pursuant to paragraph 330 of General Assembly resolution 72/73. Section III of the report sets out the agreed recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. Section IV of the report contains guidance for the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat of the Regular Process concerning the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process.

We kindly request that the present letter and the report be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the agenda item entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea".

(*Signed*) Juliette **Babb-Riley**

(*Signed*) Minna-Liina **Lind**

* A/73/150.

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Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

I. Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole

1. The eleventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects was convened pursuant to paragraph 330 of General Assembly resolution 72/73. The meeting of the Working Group was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 23 and 24 August 2018.

2. The Co-Chairs of the Working Group, Juliette Babb-Riley (Barbados) and Minna-Liina Lind (Estonia), opened the meeting. The Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs delivered opening remarks on behalf of the Secretary-General. The meeting observed a minute of silence in honour of former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, who passed away on 18 August 2018.

3. Representatives of 59 Member States, [1] one non-member State, [2] four intergovernmental organizations and other bodies [3] and two non-governmental organizations [4] attended the meeting.

4. The following members of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process, established pursuant to paragraph 287 of General Assembly resolution 70/235, also attended the meeting: Anastasia Strati (Greece), Chul Park (Republic of Korea), Carlos García Soto (Slovakia) and Alan Simcock (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). Alan Simcock participated in his capacity as Joint Coordinator of the Group of Experts.

5. The following supporting documentation was available to the meeting: a provisional agenda; an annotated provisional agenda; a format; a proposed organization of work; a note by the Joint Coordinators on the preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second cycle of the Regular Process; a note by the Joint Coordinators on the annotated outline of the second world ocean assessment; and a draft agenda and draft concept note for the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event to be held in January 2019.

6. The Working Group adopted the agenda (see sect. II below) and agreed on the organization of work as proposed by the Co-Chairs.

7. Under agenda item 4, the Co-Chairs presented the report of the Bureau of the Working Group regarding developments in the implementation of the programme of work for the period 2017–2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process since the previous meeting of the Working Group. Several delegations made general statements under the agenda item, welcoming the report and the intersessional work of the

[1] Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czechia, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Ukraine, United States of America and Uruguay.

[2] Holy See.

[3] Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, European Union, United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Secretariat (Department of Economic and Social Affairs).

[4] International Ocean Institute and International Ship Managers' Association.

Bureau and expressing their appreciation for the work of the Co-Chairs, the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat during the intersessional period. A number of delegations highlighted the progress made in the nomination of experts to the Pool of Experts, the approval by the Bureau of the list of lead and co-lead members for the second world ocean assessment, the addition of an expert to the Group of Experts, the operationalization of the second round of regional workshops and the successful launch of the new Regular Process website. A delegation highlighted the importance of a fully-constituted Group of Experts. Several delegations welcomed the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event to be held in January 2019, noting that it would, inter alia, provide a forum to identify the capacity-building needs of States in order to fulfil the objectives of the Regular Process. Some delegations provided information on their ongoing capacity-building activities. The Working Group took note of the report of the Bureau.

8. Under agenda item 5, the Working Group considered a note presented by the Joint Coordinator, Alan Simcock, on the implementation of the preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second world ocean assessment (see annex I). A number of delegations expressed their appreciation for the progress made in the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process. Some delegations expressed concern regarding the delays in implementing the preliminary timetable and implementation plan, in particular in relation to the establishment of the writing teams for the chapters of the second world ocean assessment and the ability to keep to a number of timelines. Some delegations observed a need for more communication between the Group of Experts and members of the Pool of Experts, including with regard to their roles and expected functions. A delegation noted the important role of peer-reviewers in the preparation of the second world ocean assessment and a view was expressed that there was a need to accommodate nominations of experts as peer-reviewers even after the establishment of the writing teams.

9. The Joint Coordinator noted that the Group of Experts was working towards establishing all the writing teams and would then have a better understanding of the gaps in expertise and geographical representation. He noted that members of the Pool of Experts had been requested to indicate their preferred roles, either as writing team members or peer-reviewers, and that any shortages in peer-reviewers would be referred to national focal points for their assistance in identifying additional ones. Given that the aim was to have small writing teams, he also noted that more experts from the Pool of Experts could be involved as commentators to ensure that all members played a role in the preparation of the second world ocean assessment. Regarding the communications system between the Group of Experts and the Pool of Experts, the Joint Coordinator noted that a periodical newsletter could be developed to facilitate this.

10. The Working Group requested the Group of Experts to prepare a revised preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second world ocean assessment. It also requested its Bureau to consider and adopt the revised preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second world ocean assessment, keep it under review and oversee its implementation.

11. Under agenda item 6, and pursuant to a request made to the Group of Experts during its tenth meeting (see A/73/74, para. 22 (a)), the Working Group considered a note by the Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts providing an update on the development of the annotated outline for the second world ocean assessment (see annex II). This note, presented by the Joint Coordinator, Alan Simcock, set out the views of the Joint Coordinators with regard to the steps towards the development of the annotated outline. The Joint Coordinator noted that the annotated outline required inputs from writing teams and could only be prepared once all the writing teams were approved. Given that most of the writing teams would likely be approved later in

2018, the Joint Coordinator considered that the annotated outline would likely be finalized in the forthcoming months. A delegation made proposals in relation to the outline contained in the note, which were accepted by the Joint Coordinator. In response to a query by a delegation regarding the gaps in expertise in the Pool of Experts, the Joint Coordinator noted that there was a need for more experts from the socioeconomic field and that there were gaps in regional representation that needed to be filled in order to effectively support the preparation of the second world ocean assessment.

12. The Working Group considered and took note of the progress made in the preparation of the annotated outline. The Working Group requested the Group of Experts to advise as soon as possible on the areas where the required expertise for the preparation of the second world ocean assessment might be lacking, and on the regions which to date had been underrepresented in the Pool of Experts. The Working Group also requested the secretariat to transmit a request to States to nominate, and to intergovernmental organizations to recommend, experts from the underrepresented regions and with the relevant expertise.

13. The Working Group further requested the Group of Experts to prepare, in the light of the comments received, the annotated outline for the second world ocean assessment, to be considered and adopted by the Bureau in the intersessional period. The Working Group requested its Bureau to continue to oversee the ongoing process of the constitution of writing teams for the preparation of the second world ocean assessment. In the light of the need to take into account nominations of experts by States other than their States of nationality, the Bureau was also requested to review the mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process, developed by the Bureau of the Working Group in accordance with paragraph 311 of General Assembly resolution 71/257.

14. Under agenda item 7, the Working Group considered the second round of regional workshops held in accordance with the programme of work for the second cycle of the Regular Process, for the years 2017–2020. It was noted that following the formal offers to host regional workshops for the second round in 2018 received by the secretariat (see A/73/74, para. 22 (e)), the Bureau had decided that there would be a total of seven regional workshops. The Working Group also considered and took note of the information provided by the Joint Coordinator, Alan Simcock, and by a member of the Group of Experts, Chul Park, regarding the first workshop of the second round of regional workshops, which was held in Koror, Palau, on 8 and 9 August 2018.

15. Under agenda item 8, the Working Group considered the draft concept note and draft agenda for the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event scheduled to be held in January 2019 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, prepared by the Bureau in consultation with the Group of Experts and the secretariat. It was noted that a delegation had submitted written comments on the drafts to the secretariat, which were made available to all delegations.

16. The Working Group requested its Bureau, in consultation with the Group of Experts and the secretariat, to finalize the concept note and draft agenda for the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event in the light of the comments received and discussions at the eleventh meeting of the Working Group. The Working Group requested the secretariat to invite States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event, including by nominating panellists, with due attention given to equitable geographical representation and gender balance in the selection of panellists. The Working Group further requested its Bureau, in consultation with the Group of Experts and the

secretariat, to draw up a list of panellists for the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event from representatives of States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

17. Under agenda item 9, the Working Group considered the draft recommendations and guidance to the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat. Under agenda item 10, the Director of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea reported on the status of the voluntary trust fund for the purpose of supporting the operations of the Regular Process and noted that, since the tenth meeting of the Working Group, the trust fund had received a contribution from New Zealand. Delegations were encouraged to continue to contribute to the trust fund and to make other contributions to the Regular Process pursuant to the appeal from the General Assembly in paragraph 329 of its resolution 72/73.

Adoption of recommendations to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session

18. The Working Group adopted by consensus the draft recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session (see sect. III). The Working Group also adopted the guidance to the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat (see sect. IV).

II. Agenda of the eleventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole

19. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole adopted the agenda set out below.

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. Report of the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.
5. Information from the Group of Experts regarding implementation of the preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second cycle of the Regular Process.
6. Annotated outline for the second world ocean assessment.
7. Second round of regional workshops.
8. Multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event.
9. Adoption of recommendations to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.
10. Other matters.
11. Closure of the meeting.

III. Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session

20. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole recommends to the General Assembly that it:

(a) Reiterate the need to strengthen the regular scientific assessment of the state of the marine environment in order to enhance the scientific basis for policymaking;

(b) Reaffirm the principles guiding the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects and its objective and scope as agreed upon at the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole in 2009;

(c) Recall that the Regular Process, as established under the United Nations, is accountable to the General Assembly and is an intergovernmental process guided by international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other applicable international instruments, and takes into account relevant Assembly resolutions;

(d) Reaffirm the importance of the first World Ocean Assessment as the outcome of the first cycle of the Regular Process;

(e) Reiterate its concern at the findings of the first World Ocean Assessment that the world's ocean is facing major pressures simultaneously with such great impacts that the limits of its carrying capacity are being, or, in some cases, have been reached, and that delays in implementing solutions to the problems that have already been identified as threatening to degrade the world's ocean will lead, unnecessarily, to incurring greater environmental, social and economic cost;

(f) Recall the importance of making Governments, United Nations system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental organizations, the scientific community and the general public aware of the first World Ocean Assessment and the Regular Process, and recognize with appreciation the activities undertaken in this regard during various intergovernmental meetings;

(g) Also recall the technical abstracts of the first World Ocean Assessment on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction; the ocean and the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the impacts of climate change and related changes in the atmosphere on the oceans, prepared in accordance with the programme of work for the period 2017–2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(h) Further recall that advance unedited copies of the technical abstracts were made available to the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292, the eighteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea and the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14;

(i) Recall the decision that, in the first cycle, the scope of the Regular Process focused on establishing a baseline, and that the scope of the second cycle would extend to evaluating trends and identifying gaps;

(j) Also recall the decision that the Regular Process shall be overseen and guided by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, and that the Ad Hoc Working Group shall facilitate the delivery of the outputs of the second cycle as outlined in the

programme of work for the period 2017–2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(k) Recognize with appreciation the important role of the Co-Chairs and the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole in providing guidance during the intersessional periods, including in operationalizing the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(l) Welcome the holding of the tenth and eleventh meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, on 28 February and 1 March 2018 and on 23 and 24 August 2018, respectively, in accordance with paragraph 330 of General Assembly resolution 72/73;

(m) Take note of the recommendations and guidance adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its tenth meeting,[5] and endorse the recommendations adopted by the Ad Hoc Working Group at its eleventh meeting;

(n) Reaffirm its decision that in the elaboration of an outline, the Group of Experts of the Regular Process should proceed on the basis of the preparation of a single comprehensive assessment, and note the approval by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the outline for the second world ocean assessment[6] in accordance with paragraph 330 of resolution 72/73;

(o) Take note of the preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second world ocean assessment prepared by the Group of Experts in consultation with the secretariat of the Regular Process;

(p) Recall the endorsement by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the terms of reference and working methods of the Group of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process, prepared in accordance with paragraph 310 of resolution 71/257,[7] and take note of the guidance for contributors, part II, prepared by the Group of Experts pursuant to paragraph 310 of resolution 71/257;[8]

(q) Note the appointment of an additional expert to the Group of Experts in accordance with paragraph 287 of General Assembly resolution 70/235, and urge regional groups that have not yet done so to appoint experts to the Group of Experts, taking into account the need to ensure geographical distribution and adequate expertise in socioeconomic disciplines;

(r) Welcome the expressions of interest of individuals who served in the Pool of Experts during the first cycle of the Regular Process to serve in the Pool of Experts for the second cycle;

(s) Also welcome the appointment of additional experts to the Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process by States and through recommendations from relevant intergovernmental organizations, in accordance with the mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process,[9] and encourage the further appointment of experts to the Pool of Experts;

(t) Recognize with appreciation the continued work of the members of the Group of Experts and that of the Pool of Experts of the Regular Process in the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process;

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[5] See A/73/74.

[6] Ibid., annex I.

[7] A/72/89, annex.

[8] See A/73/74, annex II. For part I of the guidance for contributors, see A/72/494, annex IV.

[9] A/72/494, annex I.

(u) Welcome the designation by States of national focal points pursuant to paragraph 315 of resolution 72/73, and urge States that have not yet done so to designate their national focal points as soon as possible;

(v) Note the finalization and adoption by the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of guidelines to assist the second round of workshops of the second cycle of the Regular Process,[10] prepared by the Group of Experts in consultation with the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group and the secretariat of the Regular Process;

(w) Take note of the summaries of the first round of regional workshops in support of the second cycle of the Regular Process, held in Lisbon in September 2017, in Auckland, New Zealand, in October 2017, in Camboriú, Brazil, in November 2017, in Bangkok in November 2017 and in Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, in December 2017, which informed the preparation of the outline for the second world ocean assessment and will assist in the identification of additional experts for the Pool of Experts and the identification of issues for consideration at the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event;

(x) Take note of the offers to host regional workshops for the second round of regional workshops in 2018 in support of the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(y) Recall the crucial importance of the Regular Process for ongoing ocean-related intergovernmental processes and its possible inputs, including for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the development of an international legally binding instrument, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Informal Consultative Process, as outlined in the programme of work for the period 2017–2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(z) Also recall the importance of ensuring that assessments, such as those included in the Global Sustainable Development Report and those prepared under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Regular Process, support one another and avoid unnecessary duplication, and also recall the importance of compatibility and synergies between such assessments and assessments at the regional level;

(aa) Request intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide information on recent and ongoing assessments and other processes at the regional and global levels relevant to the Regular Process in order for the secretariat to update the inventory of recent and ongoing assessments and other processes at the regional and global levels relevant to the Regular Process;

(bb) Take note with appreciation of the work undertaken thus far by the secretariat in compiling a capacity-building inventory of needs and opportunities relevant for the Regular Process, in accordance with the programme of work, based on information contributed by relevant United Nations system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes and by relevant intergovernmental organizations;

(cc) Invite States and non-governmental organizations, as well as intergovernmental organizations that have not already done so, to provide relevant information for inclusion in the capacity-building inventory of needs and

[10] The guidelines to assist the second round of workshops of the second cycle of the Regular Process are available from http://www.un.org/depts/los/global_reporting/10th_adhoc_2018/Elements.pdf.

opportunities relevant for the Regular Process being compiled and maintained by the secretariat;

(dd) Take note of the endorsement by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the agenda for the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event to be held in 2019, and note that the Ad Hoc Working Group will consider the outcome of the dialogue and event at its twelfth meeting;

(ee) Recall its invitation, in paragraph 326 of resolution 72/73, to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Meteorological Organization and relevant United Nations system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes, as appropriate, to assist in the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process with regard to the following activities: awareness-raising, the identification of experts for the Pool of Experts, technical and scientific support for the Bureau and the Group of Experts, hosting meetings of the writing teams and capacity-building;

(ff) Also recall the adoption by the Assembly of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission at its twenty-ninth session, from 21 to 29 June 2017, of decision IOC-XXIX/8.2, in particular regarding the provision of technical and scientific support to the second cycle of the Regular Process in accordance with the guidance of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole;

(gg) Further recall its invitation, in paragraph 328 of resolution 72/73, to relevant intergovernmental organizations to contribute, as appropriate, to the activities of the second cycle;

(hh) Urge States, international financial institutions, donor agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and natural and juridical persons to make financial contributions to the voluntary trust fund[11] and to make other contributions to the Regular Process;

(ii) Request the Bureau to continue to implement the decisions and guidance of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole during the intersessional period, including by providing oversight of the delivery of the programme of work for the period 2017–2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(jj) Request the Secretary-General to convene, in 2019, the twelfth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole from [...] to [...], with a view to providing recommendations to the General Assembly on progress in the implementation of the second cycle, and encourages the widest possible attendance of participants in the Ad Hoc Working Group.

IV. Guidance for the Bureau, the Group of Experts and the secretariat of the Regular Process concerning the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process

21. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole decides to:

(a) Request the Group of Experts to prepare a revised preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second world ocean assessment;

(b) Also request the Group of Experts to advise as soon as possible on the areas in which the required expertise for the preparation of the second world ocean assessment may be lacking and on the regions which to date have been

[11] See resolution 69/245, para. 277.

underrepresented in the Pool of Experts, and request the secretariat to transmit a request to States to nominate, and to intergovernmental organizations to recommend, experts from the underrepresented regions and with the relevant expertise;

(c) Further request the Group of Experts to prepare, in the light of the comments received at the eleventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, the annotated outline for the second world ocean assessment;

(d) Request its Bureau to consider and adopt the revised preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second world ocean assessment, keep it under review and oversee its implementation;

(e) Also request its Bureau to consider and adopt the annotated outline for the second world ocean assessment;

(f) Further request its Bureau to review the mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process, developed by the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole in accordance with paragraph 311 of General Assembly resolution 71/257;

(g) Request its Bureau to continue to oversee the ongoing process of the constitution of writing teams for the preparation of the second world ocean assessment;

(h) Also request its Bureau, in consultation with the Group of Experts and the secretariat, to finalize the concept note and draft agenda for the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event in the light of the comments received and discussions at the eleventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole;

(i) Request the secretariat to invite States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event, including by nominating panellists, with due attention given to equitable geographical representation and gender balance in the selection of panellists;

(j) Request its Bureau, in consultation with the Group of Experts and the secretariat, to draw up a list of panellists for the multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event from representatives of States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Annex I

Report on the preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

Note by the Joint Coordinators

1. The present note reports on progress in the implementation of the preliminary timetable and implementation plan for the second cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, which was presented to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process at its tenth meeting, held on 28 February and 1 March 2018. The Working Group took note of the preliminary timetable and implementation plan and requested the Bureau to oversee its implementation.

Main tasks

2. For the period from 1 January to 23 August 2018 (the date of the opening of the eleventh meeting of the Working Group), the timetable and implementation plan foresaw seven main activities:

(a) The population of the Pool of Experts on the basis of the mechanism for the establishment of the Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process adopted by the Bureau;

(b) The development and approval of the outline for the second world ocean assessment;

(c) The designation of lead members and co-lead members for the various chapters of the approved outline from among the Group of Experts of the Regular Process;

(d) The formation of writing teams for the various chapters of the approved outline;

(e) The development of guidance on formatting and size of the various chapters of the approved outline;

(f) The commencement of the second round of regional workshops in support of the second cycle of the Regular Process;

(g) Virtual meetings of the Group of Experts to prepare a report for the eleventh meeting of the Working Group.

Website and communications

3. The fundamental tools for the work of the Group of Experts were expected to be a new website, which would provide a secure and accessible base for documents and information for the Group, and a secure communications system for the exchange of ideas and documents within the Group.

4. Unfortunately, those tools only became available in July and August 2018. The new website became operational on 25 July 2018, but still does not contain the full database on the members of the Pool of Experts, although this is expected to be achieved soon. Access for the Group of Experts to the Unite Connections system (which had provided a secure document store and means of communication) was withdrawn owing to reasons beyond the secretariat's control. Happily, access for the Group is due to be restored soon.

5. The secretariat has been very proactive in devising means of working around the lack of these facilities, a lack owing to causes entirely outside its control. In particular, the secretariat has been able to provide to the Group of Experts, upon request, information from the personal history forms of members of the Pool of Experts so as to help to identify candidate experts for specific writing teams. Although very helpful, even this workaround suffers from the problem that electronic versions of personal history forms are not available for all members of the Pool of Experts (owing to non-submission by the experts themselves), especially those who were members of the Pool of Experts during the first cycle of the Regular Process and who were invited to continue to support the Regular Process. Even when the database for the Pool of Experts is operational, it may take time to get all the members of the Pool to complete and update their entries. This may therefore continue to constrain progress. It has also been possible to devise other workarounds. For example, some information has been stored on a Dropbox site. Unfortunately, the information technology systems of institutions and/or countries in which some members of the Group of Experts work do not allow access to that website, and so material has had to be communicated by email, further constraining progress.

6. In relation to the Unite Connections system, at the start of the second cycle, the Group of Experts used the system to communicate and upload documents. Increasingly, during 2017, some members of the Group of Experts found the system difficult to use, while others had difficulties in accessing the system because of incompatibilities with their national or local information technology systems. This led to a drop in usage and increased use of email communication. As a result of this drop, the Unite Connections service was withdrawn in 2018. A new Unite Connections communication system will soon be activated, and the secretariat has helpfully offered to assist in overcoming the problems that had earlier caused difficulties.

Population of the Pool of Experts

7. Good progress has been made in populating the Pool of Experts. A number of members of the Pool of Experts from the first cycle have agreed to continue. Further nominations in accordance with the mechanisms have been made, bringing the total as at 27 June 2018 to 531. Broken down by the regional groupings in the General Assembly, the number of experts is as follows:

Regional group	*Number of experts*
African States	43
Asia-Pacific States	91
Eastern European States	6
Latin American and Caribbean States	119
Western European and other States	272
Total	**531**

8. However, there remain a number of fields of expertise where coverage is thin, particularly in relation to some geographical areas.

Outline

9. The outline for the second world ocean assessment was approved at the tenth meeting of the Working Group, held on 28 February and 1 March 2018.

Designation of lead and co-lead members of the Group of Experts

10. Lead and co-lead members have been designated for all the chapters. For chapter I (summary), the Joint Coordinators have been designated as lead members, and all the other members of the Group of Experts as co-lead members. For all of the other chapters, a single member has been designated as lead member, with responsibility for ensuring the production of the chapter, with one or more co-lead members to assist. A table setting out the allocations is contained in enclosure II to the note on the annotated outline (annex II).

Formation of writing teams

11. The formation of writing teams has been hampered by the lack of suitable information technology support. As explained above, there have been problems in accessing information about the expertise of members of the Pool of Experts to identify who would be appropriate for specific writing teams. This is a particular difficulty where there is a wide range of issues to be covered within a field of expertise. The work carried out by the secretariat in providing access to information from personal history forms (as described above) has been helpful and has assisted in identifying members for some writing teams. As and when the database on the Pool of Experts is made available, this task will be simplified, although the problems of the absence of electronic personal history forms for some experts will remain until they have entered their details in the database.

12. Nevertheless, invitations have been issued in relation to 29 writing teams. None have yet been submitted for approval, since a large number of invitations are still pending, and in a number of cases the available contact information is incorrect and action will need to be taken to find a usable means of contact. The enclosure to the present note contains a table showing the status of each chapter with regard to the formation of the writing teams (or section of a chapter where a separate writing team appears to be likely to be needed).

Guidance on formatting and size

13. A template has been developed to give guidance on these issues (see annex II, enclosure I). This will be a "living document" and will be amended from time to time.

Second round of regional workshops

14. The original plan was that there would be five regional workshops in the second round: for the North Atlantic and adjacent seas, for the South Atlantic, for the North Pacific, for the South Pacific and for the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas. Regional issues relating to the Arctic and Southern Oceans are intended to be pursued through correspondence with the organizations of the Antarctic Treaty System and the Arctic Council.

15. The secretariat invited offers to host the workshops. In relation to the North Atlantic and adjacent seas and the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas, offers were received from two States from each region to act as hosts: Malta and Ukraine for the North Atlantic and adjacent seas, and Indonesia and Qatar for the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas. The Bureau considered those offers and agreed that both offers should be accepted, with the result that there will be two workshops for each of the two regions. Palau hosted the regional workshop for the North Pacific in Koror on 8 and 9 August 2018. One State has put forward an offer to host a workshop for the South Atlantic, but has yet to confirm it formally. The Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, supported by the Government of Ecuador, has recently confirmed its intention to host the regional workshop for the ocean region of the South Pacific.

16. It was intended that the focus of each workshop should be a selection of chapters (or sections of chapters), and that efforts should be made to arrange the attendance of members of writing teams for those chapters (or sections of chapters). The challenges in allocating members of the Pool of Experts to writing teams made it difficult to fulfil this approach. Instead, the focuses of (at least the earlier) workshops have been placed on chapters for which members of the Group of Experts who would be attending the workshop are lead members, and are therefore well placed to lead the discussion.

17. The workshop for the North Atlantic and adjacent seas to be held in Malta had been planned for late July 2018. The original intention for the second round of regional workshops was that they should focus on selected chapters, and that steps should be taken to ensure the attendance of members of the writing teams for those chapters. Because of the difficulties in creating writing teams, it proved impossible to select chapters and construct a workable agenda on that basis in time for the original proposed date to be achieved, and the workshop had to be postponed. A different approach has therefore been adopted for the earlier workshops, under which the chapters of focus of the workshops were selected on the basis of the availability of the lead members of the Group of Experts from the region in question, who could be expected to attend to lead the discussions on those chapters. It is hoped that later workshops can be organized so as to maximize attendance from members of writing teams.

18. The first workshop for the North Atlantic and adjacent seas is now due to be held in Malta on 27 and 28 August. The second workshop for the North Atlantic and adjacent seas is planned to be held in Odessa, Ukraine, on 17 and 18 October 2018. The workshops for the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas in Indonesia and Qatar are planned for November 2018, but precise dates have not yet been confirmed.

Virtual meetings of the Group of Experts

19. Virtual meetings of the Group of Experts have been held as and when necessary. Because of the dispersal of the members of the Group around the world, it has been necessary to hold such meetings in two stages, basically one for east longitudes and one for west longitudes, with one or both Joint Coordinators taking part in both and thus ensuring consistency and coherence.

20. The meeting scheduled in the timetable for 13–17 August 2018 was advanced to 30 July–1 August in order to permit a draft of the present note to be presented to the Bureau on 14 August before being submitted to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole.

Enclosure

Status of each chapter with regard to formation of writing teams

Chapter or section	*Topic*	*Writing team invited*	*Response pending*	*Accepted or refused*	*Submit to Bureau*	*Agreed*
1	Summary	Group of Experts of the Regular Process collectively				
2	Approach to the assessment	Lead and co-lead members				
3	Scientific understanding					
4	Drivers					
5	Physical and chemical state of the ocean					
6	Biota biodiversity	Overview by lead and co-lead members				
6A	Plankton	Yes		Yes		
6B	Invertebrates	Yes		Yes		
6C	Fish	Yes		Yes		
6D	Marine mammals	Partly		Partly		
6E	Marine reptiles	Yes		Yes		
6F	Seabirds	Yes	Yes			
6G and 6H	Marine plants and macroalgae	Partly	Yes			
7	Habitat biodiversity	Overview by lead and co-lead members				
7A	Sand and mud substrates					
7B	Rocky substrates and reefs					
7C	Intertidal zone					
7D	Atoll and tidal lagoons					
7E	Tropical and subtropical coral reefs					
7F	Cold water corals	Yes	Partly	Partly		
7G	Estuaries and deltas	Yes				
7H	Kelp forests and algal beds	Partly	Yes			
7I	Seagrass meadows	Partly	Yes			
7J	Mangroves	Partly	Yes			
7K	Salt marshes	Partly	Yes			
7L	Submarine canyons					
7M	High-latitude ice	Yes	Yes			
7N	Seamounts and pinnacles	Partly	Yes			

Chapter or section	*Topic*	*Writing team invited*	*Response pending*	*Accepted or refused*	*Submit to Bureau*	*Agreed*
7O	Abyssal plains					
7P	Open ocean					
7Q	Ridges, plateaus and trenches					
7R	Hydrothermal vents and cold seeps	Yes	Yes			
7S	Sargasso Sea	Yes	Yes			
8	Human society	Overview by lead and co-lead members				
8A	Coastal communities					
8B	Human health					
8C	Maritime industries					
8D	Maritime culture					
9	Climate pressures	Overview by lead and co-lead members				
9A	Ocean physics	Yes	Yes			
9B	Ocean chemistry	Partly	Yes			
9C	Extreme climate events	Partly	Yes			
10	Nutrient inputs	Yes	Yes			
11	Other inputs	Overview by lead and co-lead members				
11A	Persistent organic pollutants					
11B	Metals					
11C	Radioactive substances					
11D	Pharmaceuticals					
11E	Atmospheric inputs					
11F	Hydrocarbons					
11G	Offshore inputs					
11H	Contaminant concentrations					
12	Solid waste					
13	Erosion and sedimentation					
14	Infrastructure					
15	Capture fisheries	Yes		Yes		
16	Aquaculture					
17	Seaweed	Partly				
18	Desalinization and salt					

Chapter or section	*Topic*	*Writing team invited*	*Response pending*	*Accepted or refused*	*Submit to Bureau*	*Agreed*
19	Seabed mining					
20	Offshore hydrocarbons					
21	Noise	Yes		Yes		
22	Renewable energy	Yes		Yes		
23	Marine transport					
24	Tourism and recreation					
25	Invasive species	Yes		Yes		
26	Marine genetic resources	Yes	Yes			
27	Marine hydrates					
28	Cumulative impacts					
29	Marine spatial planning	Partly				
30	Management approaches	Yes	Yes			
31	Overall benefits					

Annex II

Annotated outline for the second world ocean assessment

Note by the Joint Coordinators

1. At its tenth meeting, held on 28 February and 1 March 2018, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, following discussions on the revised draft outline presented by the Joint Coordinators of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process, approved the outline for the second world ocean assessment and requested the Group of Experts to prepare an annotated outline for the second world ocean assessment for the eleventh meeting of the Working Group, to be held on 23 and 24 August 2018.[12]

2. A proper annotated outline for the second world ocean assessment can only be prepared when the writing teams for the various chapters and sections are in place and can consider how they wish to develop the various chapters within the structure of the approved outline. It would also require an opportunity for the Group of Experts to have a thorough discussion in person (similar to that which took place to develop the draft outline). Given that the preparation of an annotated outline was not foreseen beforehand, no specific meeting was included in the timetable and implementation plan for the assessment (provided to the Working Group and approved at its tenth meeting) to provide such an opportunity.

3. For the reasons explained in the report of the Joint Coordinators on the preliminary timetable and implementation plan, the assembling of writing teams is still under way for most of the chapters (there are some that have been finalized, in particular for some of the sections within chapters 6 and 7 where individual writing teams are needed). In setting up writing teams it is important to ensure a good distribution of experts from around the world so that the situation in each ocean basin is properly covered in each chapter. Regard must also be given to gender balance.

4. Given the above need for writing team involvement, a comprehensive annotated outline therefore cannot be provided at this stage. The Group of Experts is not in a position to anticipate how the conveners and members of the writing teams will propose to develop the themes specified in the approved outline.

5. With the agreement and input of the other members of the Group of Experts, the Joint Coordinators have therefore agreed to submit the present note setting out their views as on the likely development of the outline so as to provide a basis for discussion at the eleventh meeting of the Working Group on the future development of the outline. The note is set out under the chapter and section headings specified in bold type in the approved outline, since the outline provides that these would form part of the structure of the second world ocean assessment. Not all section headings from chapters have been reproduced in the present note for brevity. The chapters, however, will definitely cover all of the fields specified in such headings, although the structure of the headings will not necessarily be followed.

6. In addition, the Group of Experts has developed a template for the chapters of the second world ocean assessment, expanding the guidance given in the initial background to the outline for the second world ocean assessment. This is contained in enclosure I. It will be revised from time to time in the light of experience gained. Moreover, the list of the lead and co-lead members for the chapters of the outline for

[12] See A/73/74.

the second world ocean assessment, also developed by the Group of Experts, is contained in enclosure II.

7. As stated in the approved outline, each chapter (or each section of each chapter), other than chapters 1–4, would include:

(a) A one-paragraph abstract of the chapter or section;

(b) A very short summary of the situation recorded in World Ocean Assessment I;

(c) A description of environmental changes between 2010 and 2020;

(d) A description of the economic and social consequences and/or of the other economic or social changes (including, where appropriate, changes in global distribution of benefits and disbenefits and issues related to concepts of natural capital);

(e) A description of the main information gaps in relation to the subject matter;

(f) A description of the main capacity-building gaps in the field.

8. Again, as set out in the approved outline, where appropriate, each chapter or section would review separately the situation in the various ocean regions (Arctic, North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Indian Ocean, North Pacific, South Pacific and Southern Ocean).

9. Finally, as set out in the approved outline, where appropriate, each chapter will contain an explicit evaluation of how the developments described in the chapter are contributing to the achievement of relevant Sustainable Development Goals. The writing team for each chapter will be asked to consider the Goals thus identified that are relevant to its chapter, and whether any further Goals need to be considered in that chapter. Chapter 1 (overall summary) will include an overview of those evaluations for all relevant Goals.

Part 1: Summary

Chapter 1: Overall summary

This chapter will be developed by the Group of Experts collectively, under the leadership of the Joint Coordinators. In particular, it will focus on issues relevant to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including those highlighted in the technical abstract of World Ocean Assessment I relating to the 2030 Agenda.

Part 2: Introduction

Chapter 2: Approach to the assessment

Sections (a) (purpose of the assessment) and (b) (approach of the assessment) of this chapter are largely sketched out in the approved outline, some of it with full text. It will be developed to fill out the full text of the remaining parts specified in the outline.

Section (c) (further detail on the drivers-pressures-state-impact-response approach and ecosystem services) will provide an overview of the drivers-pressures-state-impact-response framework and the latest developments in the use of the framework. It will also provide an update on the understanding of ecosystem services

provided by the marine environment, building on the baselines provided in chapters 4–9 of the first assessment.

Chapter 3: Scientific understanding of the ocean

This chapter covers the fundamental basis for the rest of the assessment. In developing the chapter, consideration will be given to the first *Global Ocean Science Report*, published by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2017, and the decision of the General Assembly in December 2017 to proclaim the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development for the period 2021–2030 (resolution 72/73). The outline specifies that it should cover recent step-change improvements in understanding the ocean, including: physical and chemical properties of the ocean; ocean bathymetry; ocean circulation; effects on biota of anthropogenic noise; and sources of marine debris. In the light of the remit of the Regular Process, it will also need to consider whether there has been comparable progress in understanding economic and social aspects of the ocean.

Part 3: Drivers of changes in the marine environment

Chapter 4: Drivers

A substantial amount of work has been done on issues relating to how to define "drivers" and what is driving environmental, economic and social changes in the world's environment in the global assessment under the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. This chapter will need to take account of this work as well as other work detailing the planetary socioeconomic changes that are driving change in the marine environment. The sections included in this chapter (as approved) include:

(a) Developments in human population (especially populations in coastal areas);

(b) Development aspirations:

(i) Food security and food safety;

(ii) Resource use (including demand for metals and hydrocarbons and the use of marine genetic resources);

(iii) Energy;

(iv) Transport;

(v) Leisure and recreation;

(c) Drive to sustainability (including the Sustainable Development Goals);

(d) Cultural needs and aspirations;

(e) Contributions from improved technologies.

Part 4: Current state of the marine environment and its trends

The structure of the approved outline for the second world ocean assessment is significantly different from that of World Ocean Assessment I. This is to meet the

wishes, expressed in the first round of regional workshops, that the second assessment follow more closely the drivers-pressures-state-impact-response approach, and to provide an update on any changes to the baselines set out in the first assessment. Part 4 therefore concentrates on changes to the **state** of various aspects of the ocean, while part 5 looks at changes to key **pressures** that are leading to the changed states of those aspects.

Chapter 5: Trends in the physical and chemical state of the ocean

The sections within this chapter are well-recognized specialisms within the general discipline of oceanography, and the relevant writing teams will need to evaluate which developments in the state of these disciplines can be regarded as the "step-changes" from the baseline set out in World Ocean Assessment I, to which the approved outline refers. The potential overlaps in describing change in the physical and chemical state of the ocean with chapter 9, on the pressures from changes in the climate and associated changes since the first assessment, will need to be considered.

(a) **Sea temperature**;

(b) **Sea levels**;

(c) **Salinity**;

(d) **Ocean circulation**;

(e) **Sea ice**;

(f) **Ocean chemistry, including ocean acidification**;

(g) **Dissolved oxygen**.

Together with chapter 9, this chapter will be an appropriate place to update information on issues identified in the technical abstract of World Ocean Assessment I on the impacts of climate change and related changes in the atmosphere on the ocean.

Chapter 6: Trends in the biodiversity of main taxa of marine biota

As the approved outline provides, the biodiversity of taxa will be described in terms of abundance, distribution, productivity and diversity within the taxon. Separate writing teams will be needed for many of the sections of this chapter and it is likely that in order to consider the vast diversity of species within each taxon, each section of the chapter will need to be further subdivided on the basis of major taxonomic groups. In addition to the specific chapters on species of concern in World Ocean Assessment I, many of these taxa were described in the regional chapters of that assessment, on the seven ocean basins and the open ocean deep sea. The descriptions in the second assessment will bring together the global description with regional observations, as appropriate, in fulfilment of the guidance on regional aspects in the approved outline.

(a) **Plankton**: as in chapter 6 of World Ocean Assessment I, this section will need to consider net primary production in the ocean as well as other components of the plankton community and the various factors that are driving any changes observed from the baseline identified in the first assessment and the implications of those changes for society.

It will be for consideration whether issues such as the impact on primary production and plankton of microparticles and nanoparticles of plastic and other substances (such as titanium dioxide) are better considered here or in the chapters on

the inputs of hazardous substances and solid waste. In World Ocean Assessment I, they were considered in conjunction with primary production.

The section will also consider the state of microbes and viruses in the ocean; it is to be noted that the absence of a thorough consideration of microbes and viruses was a point of criticism of World Ocean Assessment I. It is therefore likely to be necessary to provide material on those taxa in order to give the baseline, which was missing from World Ocean Assessment I. In the regional workshop for the North Pacific, held in Palau on 8 and 9 August 2018, it was proposed that the description of "microbes and viruses" would be better as "bacteria and viruses".

(b) **Marine invertebrates**: these taxa were considered in World Ocean Assessment I in the eight regional chapters (36A-36H). This section of chapter 6 will therefore bring together the information on regional aspects of the current state of marine invertebrates in the one place. Any potential overlaps in describing change in the state of marine invertebrates in relation to the factors driving those changes to be described in chapter 15 (capture fisheries and harvesting of wild marine invertebrates) will be considered along with that chapter.

(c) **Fish**: as with marine invertebrates, this section will bring together information that was covered across the regional chapters in the first assessment. It will also be necessary for this section to include the developments in respect of sharks, other elasmobranchs, tuna and billfish, which were covered by separate chapters (chaps. 40 and 41). Again, the potential overlaps in describing change in the biodiversity of fish, particularly in relation to the factors driving those changes, with chapter 15, on the pressures from changes in capture fisheries, will need to be considered.

(d) **Marine mammals**: this section will provide an update on changes from the baselines provided in chapter 37 of the first assessment.

(e) **Marine reptiles**: this section will provide an update on changes from the baselines provided in chapter 39 of the first assessment.

(f) **Seabirds**: this section will provide an update on changes from the baselines provided in chapter 38 of World Ocean Assessment I.

(g) **Marine plants**: the state of biodiversity of marine plants was considered in chapters 47–49 and to a lesser extent in the regional chapters of World Ocean Assessment I. This section will therefore bring together the information on regional aspects of the current state of marine plants in the one chapter. The potential overlaps in describing change in the state of marine plant biodiversity with chapter 7, which contains sections on changes in the state of seagrass meadows, mangroves and salt marshes since the first assessment, will need to be considered.

(h) **Macroalgae**: in World Ocean Assessment I, the state of macroalgae was considered mainly in chapter 47, which included baselines for kelp forests and seagrass meadows. It is now intended that the broader taxa of macroalgae be included in a section of chapter 6 that is separate from other marine plants, recognizing the broader taxonomic diversity of macroalgae. The state of the floating species of *Sargassum* macroalgae will be considered with the habitat of the Sargasso Sea, given the integral contribution the species makes to that habitat.

Chapter 7: Trends in the state of biodiversity in marine habitats

As the approved outline provides, changes in the state of biodiversity in marine habitats will be described in terms of diversity, abundance, distribution and productivity and what the implications of change might mean for habitat functioning and the provision of ecosystem services. Baselines for the first four sections of this chapter were described in the eight regional chapters of World Ocean Assessment I. In the second assessment, the sections of chapter 7 will allow for changes in each of the habitats to be clearly articulated in distinct sections and, where global baselines were not provided in the first assessment, for these to be provided.

(a) **Sand and mud substrates (soft bottom)**: the potential overlaps in describing change in the state of sand and mud substrate biodiversity with other habitat sections, in particular those on island lagoons, estuaries and deltas and seagrass meadows, will need to be considered.

(b) **Rocky substrates and reefs**: the potential overlaps in describing change in the state of rocky substrate and reef biodiversity with other habitat sections, in particular the two sections on corals and the section on intertidal zones, will need to be considered.

(c) **Intertidal zone**: the potential overlaps in describing change in the state of intertidal zone biodiversity with other habitat sections, in particular that on rocky substrates, will need to be considered.

(d) **Atoll and island lagoons**: the potential overlaps in describing change in the state of atoll and island lagoon biodiversity with other habitat sections, in particular those on sand and mud substrates and tropical coral reefs, will need to be considered.

(e) **Tropical and subtropical coral reefs**: the recognized and well-reported rapid change in these habitats will need to be related to the baseline provided in chapter 43 of World Ocean Assessment I.

(f) **Cold-water corals**: this section will need to describe the developments from the baselines described in chapter 42 of World Ocean Assessment I.

The following eight sections represent an attempt to develop a more rational structure for describing coastal habitats than that provided in the first assessment. They will largely build on the baselines provided in chapters 44 and 47–49, together with part of chapter 51 (in which submarine features were described) of World Ocean Assessment I. Habitats associated with algal species have been separated from seagrass meadows and the diversity of communities associated recognized by expanding the discussion of changes in biodiversity to include algal beds as well as kelp forests. The unique communities associated with submarine canyons have also been recognized as a distinct point of discussion. The regional workshop for the North Pacific, held in Palau on 8 and 9 August 2018, suggested that the section on submarine canyons should also include continental slopes. Particular considerations for overlaps with other sections of the chapter are detailed individually.

(g) **Estuaries and deltas**: the potential overlaps in describing change in the state of estuary and delta biodiversity with sand and mud substrate and mangrove biodiversity will need to be considered.

(h) **Kelp forests and algal beds**: the potential overlaps in describing change in the state of kelp forest and algal bed biodiversity with rocky substrate and reef biodiversity will need to be considered.

(i) **Seagrass meadows**: the potential overlaps in describing change in the state of seagrass meadow biodiversity with sand and mud substrate and estuary and delta biodiversity will need to be considered.

(j) **Mangroves**: the potential overlaps in describing change in the state of mangrove biodiversity with estuary and delta biodiversity will need to be considered.

(k) **Salt marshes**: the potential overlaps in describing change in the state of salt marsh biodiversity with the intertidal zone will need to be considered.

(l) **Submarine canyons**: as noted above, the regional workshop held in Palau has proposed that this should be extended to cover the continental slopes as well.

(m) **High-latitude ice (including that over areas of open ocean)**: this section will build on the baseline provided in chapter 46 of World Ocean Assessment I. It will also need to build on the baselines provided in chapters 36G and 36H (Arctic and Southern Oceans). Outputs from the monitoring programmes of the Arctic Council and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources and the research programmes Integrating Climate and Ecosystem Dynamics in the Southern Ocean, Ecosystem Studies of Subarctic and Arctic Seas and that of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research will provide important inputs to this section.

(n) **Seamounts and pinnacles**: this section will build on the baselines provided in chapter 51 of the first assessment, as well as information provided in the regional chapters.

The following five sections represent an attempt to develop a better structure for dealing with the features of the ocean beyond the geophysical continental shelf. This revised structure is necessary to avoid the unsatisfactory situation whereby some aspects were dealt with in both chapter 36F and chapter 51 of the first assessment by different writing teams. These sections will be an appropriate place to build on the baselines and issues identified in the technical abstract of World Ocean Assessment I on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

(o) **Abyssal plains**;

(p) **Open ocean**;

(q) **Ridges, plateaus and trenches**;

(r) **Hydrothermal vents and cold seeps**: this section will build on the baselines provided in chapter 45 of the first assessment, as well as information provided in the regional chapters.

(s) **Sargasso Sea**: the Sargasso Sea is a unique ecosystem which is best studied and described as a unit. This will probably also be the best place to consider the problems of the floating mats of *Sargassum* that have been affecting both Caribbean islands and West African States.

Chapter 8: Trends in the state of human society in relation to the ocean

In World Ocean Assessment I, the aspects of human society related to the ocean were described in relation to the human activities that have an impact on the marine environment. In contrast to this, the approved outline requires a survey of the state of human society under four headings. These will build on the baselines provided across a number of themes that are described in various chapters of World Ocean Assessment

I. Identifying the changes in states associated with the four sections of this chapter will provide a more coherent picture of the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of the marine environment. Overlaps and synergies with other chapters of the second assessment (for example, those dealing with pollution and hazardous substances, shipping and fisheries) will need to be considered. Currently, the Pool of Experts contains experts identified as having expertise across the four sections of this chapter, but may not yet contain a sufficient range of experts to deal with this chapter.

(a) **Coastal communities**, including the coastal population, the size of coastal communities, their wealth or income and their vulnerability and adaptability to and dependency on the ocean (including dependence on, and engagement with, marine resources).

This section would bring together important aspects of the way in which human communities relate to the ocean. In World Ocean Assessment I, these aspects are scattered across a number of chapters and therefore do not present a coherent picture.

(b) **Human health as affected by the ocean**, including the health of coastal communities relative to inland communities, the effects of exposure to contaminated seawater, the scale of beach closures for health reasons and the extent to which food resources available from the sea create health problems through the content of hazardous substances (including metals, microplastics and nanoparticles) and pathogens in them.

This section would largely update various sections of chapter 20 (land-based inputs) of World Ocean Assessment I but would also expand some of the material in chapter 6 of that assessment (primary production).

(c) **Maritime industries**, including their economic performance, the role of freight transport in international trade, the role of ferries and coastwise shipping in internal transport, recruitment of workers, the proportion of their workers who are women, the rates of death of, and injury to, their workers, the protection of their working conditions, their levels of pay, maritime security, human trafficking, forced labour, which has also been referred to as "modern slavery", smuggling, access to markets and handling facilities for fisheries produce and the proportion of fisheries that are artisanal, culture-related or conducted by indigenous peoples.

This section will describe developments in relation to a number of issues related to maritime industries discussed in various chapters of World Ocean Assessment I, including the social aspects of fisheries (chap. 15), fishing vessels (chap. 17), maritime transport (chap. 17) and the coastal infrastructure and social aspects of tourism industries (chap. 27).

(d) **Maritime cultural services**, including the extent to which marine cultural resources are conserved, support for cultural activities linked to the sea, and the scale of use of objects from the sea that are valued for cultural reasons.

This section would update most of the material in chapter 8 of World Ocean Assessment I (aesthetic, cultural, religious and spiritual ecosystem services derived from the marine environment).

Part 5: Trends in pressures on the marine environment

The approved outline provides that each chapter or section in this part should include discussion of: (a) the impacts both on marine biota and habitats and on humans; (b) management measures (both adaptive and mitigatory) taken in response; and (c) the interplay between all terrestrial ecosystems (including mountain, hill, lowland and coastal ecosystems) and the ocean.

Chapter 9: Pressures from changes in climate and atmosphere

This chapter has clear linkages with chapter 5, where the state of the physical and chemical aspects of the ocean will be detailed. The potential overlaps and synergies between the two chapters will need to be considered as a result. While pressures that have an impact on the physical and chemical state of the ocean were not dealt with in a specific chapter in the first assessment, some aspects were detailed in chapters 4 and 5 of that assessment. The special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the oceans and cryosphere will be prepared in parallel to the second world ocean assessment (it is due to be completed in September 2019). The next regular report of the Panel (sixth assessment report) will not be completed until the first half of 2022. This chapter will therefore need to follow the Panel's material as it is produced, relying on the relevant literature rather than directly on reports of the Panel. In addition, the outputs from the eighteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, held in 2017, which focused its discussions on the topic "Effects of climate change on the oceans", will be informative for this chapter. This chapter will also be an appropriate place in which to update information on issues identified in the technical abstract of World Ocean Assessment I on the impacts of climate change and related changes in the atmosphere on the ocean. This chapter will comprise the following sections:

(a) **Physical properties of the ocean**, including changes in circulation and factors driving circulation, such as heat and stratification;

(b) **Ocean chemistry**, including salinity, carbon and nutrient cycling and ocean acidification;

(c) **Extreme climate events**, including changes in the interplay between climate change and natural climate phenomena.

Chapter 10: Changes in inputs to the marine environment of nutrients

This chapter will build on the baselines provided in chapter 20 of World Ocean Assessment I, which included a regional survey of what was known at the time about nutrient inputs and their effects. This may include outputs from new regional assessments reportedly being conducted by regional seas organizations in the eastern Indian Ocean and the South-East Pacific, as well as from regions with established monitoring systems.

Chapter 11: Changes in liquid and atmospheric inputs to the marine environment from land (including through groundwater), ships and offshore installations

This chapter will provide an update on the baselines provided in chapter 20 of World Ocean Assessment I. It also brings together updates on baselines relating to offshore installations (which were detailed in chapter 21) and shipping (which were detailed in chapter 17) into the one chapter, in order to provide a more comprehensive overview of changes in liquid and atmospheric inputs. Given the specificities associated with each of the sections within this chapter (listed below), separate writing teams may be needed to provide an update on each section.

(a) **Persistent organic pollutants**;

(b) **Metals**;

(c) **Radioactive substances (including naturally occurring radioactive material)**;

(d) **Personal care products, pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals**;

(e) **Atmospheric pollutants**;

(f) **Hydrocarbons**;

(g) **Other substances used on, and discharged from, offshore installations**;

(h) **Distribution of, and trends in, contaminant concentrations**.

Chapter 12: Changes in inputs and distribution of solid waste in the marine environment (other than dredged material)

This chapter will provide an update to the baselines provided in chapter 24 of World Ocean Assessment I, dealing with the regular use of the ocean as a place for the disposal of solid waste. However, there is a partial and declining fulfilment of reporting obligations under the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972, and the 1996 Protocol thereto. Without better reporting, the second world ocean assessment will have difficulty in dealing with this aspect of this chapter.

This chapter will also provide an update to the baseline provided in chapter 25 (marine debris) of World Ocean Assessment I. The input of plastics (including microplastics and nanoplastics) into the marine environment has become a much more high-profile issue than it had been when that chapter was written. The chapter will cover activities resulting in marine debris, including plastics, abandoned fishing gear, microparticles and nanoparticles, and estimates of the sources from land, ships and offshore installations. It will draw on associated research on developing regional and global baselines. The outputs from the seventeenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process, held in 2016, which focused its discussions on the topic "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics", will be informative for this chapter.

Chapter 13: Changes in erosion and sedimentation

This chapter will provide an update to baselines provided in chapter 26 (land/sea interaction) of World Ocean Assessment I. It has become increasingly clear that the management of inland areas (particularly in relation to forest clearance and the creation of dams) can have a significant impact on the marine environment through the increase or reduction in the sediment carried by watercourses to the sea. The absence of, or the increase in, the replenishment of sediment can significantly affect the coastal zone and its environment. Overlaps and synergies with chapter 9, particularly in association with changes in sea level and the intensity of storm events, will need to be considered.

Chapter 14: Changes in coastal and marine infrastructure

This chapter will provide an update to baselines provided across several chapters of World Ocean Assessment I, including chapter 18 (ports), chapter 19 (submarine cables and pipelines), chapter 26 (land/sea interaction) and chapter 27 (tourism and recreation). Bringing together content dispersed across these chapters in the first assessment will provide a coherent and comprehensive picture of the pressure

that developments in marine infrastructure are exerting on the marine environment. Specifically (as approved), the chapter will cover:

- Amounts of land reclaimed from the sea
- Extent of new land defences against the sea, and extent of sea defences abandoned
- Extent of coastal development, including development for tourism
- Other adaptations affecting coastal populations as a result of sea level rise
- Changes in port installations and their management, including dredging
- Changes in submarine cables and submarine pipelines.

Chapter 15: Changes in capture fisheries and harvesting of wild marine invertebrates

This chapter will build on the baselines provided in part IV of World Ocean Assessment I, which gave an overview of the situation with regard to food security and food safety in relation to food from the sea. This chapter is intended to update that overview in relation to levels of catches of fish, shellfish and other invertebrates, both within and beyond areas of national jurisdiction, and through commercial fisheries, artisanal (otherwise called small-scale) and subsistence fisheries. The Joint Coordinators consider that this should include more detail on the situation in the different ocean basins; part IV of the first assessment concentrated mainly on the global picture, and there is a need to update information on fisheries and harvesting included in the regional chapters of the first assessment in order to capture regional specificities.

This chapter will also need to consider the levels of by-catch and other impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems and benthic ecosystems, the levels of post-harvest loss, the levels of fish-stock propagation and the use of marine protein in agriculture and aquaculture. It will also need to review estimated levels of illegal, unregulated and unreported fisheries and the levels of non-food harvesting (for example, for feedstocks for terrestrial stock-rearing). Given the broad range of fisheries and harvesting practices, a number of writing teams dealing with specific components of the chapter may be needed.

Chapter 16: Changes in aquaculture

Aquaculture (including mariculture) is a fast-growing activity within the marine environment. This chapter will need to update the baseline information in chapter 12 of World Ocean Assessment I.

Chapter 17: Changes in seaweed harvesting and use

This chapter will need to update the information in chapter 14 (seaweeds) of World Ocean Assessment I. The overview of the state of marine macroalgae will be dealt with in chapter 6H, as explained above. This chapter will therefore need to focus specifically on human uses of seaweed.

Chapter 18: Changes in desalinization and in the production of sea salt

Chapter 28 of World Ocean Assessment I reviewed the use of the desalinization of seawater to provide freshwater and showed the importance of this process for the Gulf States and some islands such as Malta, Okinawa, Japan, and Singapore. No experts in this field have yet been appointed to the Pool of Experts. This chapter will also need to update the material in chapter 8 of World Ocean Assessment I on marine salt production.

Chapter 19: Changes in seabed mining

This chapter will update chapter 23 (offshore mining) of World Ocean Assessment I. It will be important for the writing team for the chapter to consider updates in information from countries where mining within areas of national jurisdiction is significant, particularly in the "tin belt" in South-East Asia and where mining in areas beyond national jurisdiction is starting.

Chapter 20: Changes in hydrocarbon exploration and extraction

This chapter will provide an update to chapter 21 of World Ocean Assessment I. Issues relating to discharges and noise from this sector will now be dealt with in the chapters relating to those issues. It will be necessary for the decommissioning of offshore installations that have reached the end of their useful life to be considered in more detail in this chapter, since this issue will become more significant as more offshore oilfields and gas fields reach the end of their productive lives.

Chapter 21: Trends in inputs of anthropogenic noise to the marine environment

Inputs of anthropogenic noise into the marine environment were only considered in the first assessment under the chapters dealing with shipping and offshore hydrocarbon industries. Noise inputs are derived from many more sources than those two sectors. There has been an explosion in information on the measurement of inputs and their associated impacts over the past two decades, together with improved understanding of effects across all species (see chap. 3). This chapter will therefore provide the opportunity to give a more comprehensive and coherent treatment of this pressure. Global baselines will be provided for those aspects for which they were not provided in the first assessment. The outputs from the nineteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process, which focused its discussions on the topic "Anthropogenic underwater noise", will be informative for this chapter.

Chapter 22: Developments in renewable energy sources

This chapter will provide an update to material dealing with renewable energy sources in chapter 22 (other marine-based energy industries) of World Ocean Assessment I. Currently, the Pool of Experts, although containing a number of experts with expertise in renewable energy sources, does not cover the whole spectrum of renewable energy technologies and their environmental and economic impacts.

Chapter 23: Developments in marine transportation

This chapter will provide an update to the baselines provided in chapter 17 (shipping) of World Ocean Assessment I. Some of the baselines provided in that chapter (for pollution, noise, and economic and social aspects) will be included in chapter 8C (maritime industries), chapter 10 (nutrient inputs from ships' sewage), chapter 11 (land-based inputs other than nutrients), chapter 21 (noise) and chapter 25 (invasive species).

Chapter 24: Developments in tourism and recreation activities

This chapter will provide an update to the baselines provided in chapter 27 (tourism and recreation) of World Ocean Assessment I. Some aspects of that chapter will be considered elsewhere in the second world ocean assessment, especially the employment aspects in chapter 8 and tourist infrastructure in chapter 14.

Chapter 25: Invasive species

Invasive species were only dealt with in chapter 17 (shipping) of World Ocean Assessment I, in which they were discussed in relation to their transport by shipping and the resulting distribution of invasive species. This chapter will allow for a more comprehensive discussion of current understanding on marine invasive species, including transport in ballast water and on ships' hulls, the drivers of their distribution and establishment and their impacts on ecosystems.

Chapter 26: Developments in exploration and use of marine genetic resources

Chapter 29 (use of marine genetic resources) in World Ocean Assessment I explained the background to the exploration and research into the use of marine genetic resources, but noted that (the considerable potential in this field notwithstanding) there was only limited success in applying them to practical uses. This chapter will update the baseline provided in that chapter and will consider the current discussions on aspects of the use of marine genetic resources in the negotiations on an international instrument on biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Chapter 27: Marine hydrates — a potentially emerging issue

Investigations have shown that there are large amounts of marine hydrates (compounds of methane and water) forming in the marine environment, and that they have the potential to provide new energy sources. However, their decomposition and release can lead to a decrease in the stability of the seabed and significant increases in methane contributions to greenhouse gases. At present, the constraints of pressure and temperature prevent them both from being released and from being an economically viable prospect for extraction. Changes in ocean temperatures associated with climate change have the potential to relax those constraints. This chapter will cover this topic for the first time and therefore will need to provide a baseline on current understanding of and outlooks for their potential release and use.

Chapter 28: Cumulative impacts

It is increasingly being acknowledged that the management of marine environments needs to be integrated in such a way as to quantify and manage the cumulative nature of impacts from the multiple sectors utilizing marine environments (economic, social and cultural). Coverage of this topic in the first assessment was limited and dispersed across some of the regional chapters and some of the summary chapters (for example, chapter 54). Much research has been conducted on this theme in the past decade. This chapter therefore needs to summarize this research and provide a comprehensive baseline on current understanding, particularly of approaches to quantifying impacts across sectors and jurisdictions and outputs of those assessments.

Part 6: Trends in management approaches to the marine environment

World Ocean Assessment I did not contain a discussion of management approaches in general to the marine environment, partly because of the instruction not to carry out any policy analysis. However, it is clear that many of the frameworks and approaches that have been developed for the management of human activities in the ocean are relevant to the ocean assessment and there is merit in identifying these and ongoing developments in the science associated with the varying approaches. It is therefore appropriate to consider current understanding associated with the various management approaches aimed at limiting or mitigating pressures from human activities on the ocean.

Chapter 29: Developments in marine spatial planning

The techniques of marine spatial planning are increasingly being applied by many countries within their national jurisdiction. This chapter will provide a baseline of current approaches in the spatial planning of human activities. The outputs from the marine spatial planning programme of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, as well as the various regional programmes (for example, under the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) will inform this chapter. This chapter will need to review the various techniques that are being used for this purpose in the context of the various national legal structures in order to demonstrate the crucial questions that need to be considered if marine spatial planning is to be applied.

Chapter 30: Developments in management approaches

In addition to marine spatial planning, which is important in reconciling potential conflicts between different sectors, a range of management approaches is being applied within and across sectors in the marine environment, aimed at ensuring that uses of the marine environment are sustainable. This chapter will provide a baseline of management approaches and frameworks, current research associated with the development of particularly integrated approaches to management and their regional application. *Specifically (as approved), the chapter will cover:*

- Ecosystem-based management approaches
- Culturally-based management approaches
- Community-based management approaches

- Area-based management tools, including marine protected areas and special areas (such as special areas under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas)
- Adaptation to climate change and resilience-building.

Chapter 31: Developments in the understanding of overall benefits from the ocean to humans

This chapter will provide an update to the baselines provided in chapter 55 (overall value of the ocean to humans) of World Ocean Assessment I, including the distribution of those benefits and the role in safeguarding those benefits of improved implementation of international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In particular, the chapter will provide an update on current understanding of the services provided by the ocean, economic valuation of those services and any developments associated with preserving and enhancing those benefits, including implementation of international law as reflected in the Convention.

Enclosure I

Template for chapters of the second world ocean assessment

This template is proposed to be implemented across all chapters. It aims to provide a consistent structure to the chapters of the assessment and ensure that all chapters address the aims of the assessment. It is intended to be broad brush to ensure its applicability across chapters. Chapters should aim to be a maximum of nine pages, or 3,000 words, and follow the format set out for chapters and provided to writing teams. Chapters should include a maximum of four tables (including those set out in the present template) and four figures. Where a chapter is divided into multiple sections (shown in the outline in bold type), a maximum of four pages for both items 3 and 4 may be used for each section, together with a corresponding increase in the number of tables. This applies in particular to chapters 6 and 7. Where the second world ocean assessment will need to include new material to provide a baseline that is not provided by World Ocean Assessment I, a further four pages can be allowed. If the writing team for a chapter thinks that lengthier treatment can be justified, it should discuss with the lead member for the chapter in the Group of Experts of the Regular Process, who can seek the agreement of the Group to a larger allocation.

1. Keynote points: a one-paragraph abstract of the chapter or section

Three to five points summarizing the key results of the chapter. The key findings are intended to provide the reader with a rapid and brief understanding of the main findings of the chapter's assessment.

2. Introduction, including a very short summary of the situation recorded in the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (World Ocean Assessment I)

This should also provide a brief (maximum one page) introduction to the topic, including:

(a) The scope of the topic so that it is clear what the chapter will cover and what it will not. In particular, this section will identify where there are overlaps or interactions with other chapters and how these have been managed or minimized;

(b) How the topic is affected by and affects other components of the marine system (and where there might be relevant linkages with other chapters);

(c) How the topic is relevant to human communities and well-being (and where there may be relevant linkages with other chapters);

(d) A brief summary of the baseline state provided in the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (World Ocean Assessment I);

(e) Advances in knowledge and capacity that have contributed to the evaluation of the change in state.

3. Description of the environmental changes (between 2010 and 2020)

Using World Ocean Assessment I as a baseline, provide detail (maximum four pages) on the change in state at the global level (and the uncertainty associated with the determination of that change) that has occurred for the topic (driver, pressure, state or response) since the baseline was established. This should be within the context of any established longer-term trend. This section of the chapter should identify clear linkages with other chapters, where relevant. It should include:

(a) Changes in the overall status (which can include physical or biological state);

(b) Factors associated with the change;

(c) Impacts of the change on and interactions with other components of the marine system.

4. Description of the economic and social consequences and/or the other economic or social changes (including, where appropriate, changes in the global distribution of benefits and disbenefits and issues related to concepts of natural capital)

A synopsis (maximum two pages, or up to six pages if section 3 is correspondingly reduced) of social, economic and cultural aspects associated with any change in state at the global level. This section of the chapter should identify clear linkages with other chapters where relevant. This should include:

(a) Currently observed consequences;

(b) Implications that the change in state may have for achieving the integrated set of global priorities and objectives set out under the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This should comprehensively include consideration of the interactions between Goals and any benefits and trade-offs between the Goals (noting that the ocean is relevant to all 17 of the Goals).[1]

5. Key region-specific changes and consequences

A synopsis (maximum one page) of important regional issues or aspects associated with the topic for any one or all (as relevant) of the regions:

(a) The Arctic Ocean;

(b) The North Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the North Sea;

(c) The South Atlantic Ocean and the Wider Caribbean;

(d) The Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Persian Gulf;

(e) The North Pacific Ocean;

(f) The South Pacific Ocean;

(g) The Southern Ocean.

6. Outlook

A synopsis (maximum one page) of the outlook for the topic under a business-as-usual scenario, including:

(a) Anticipated outlook for the state of the topic over the near to medium term (around 10–20 years);

(b) Ecosystem consequences of continued change in the system;

[1] Various publications assessing the interactions of the Sustainable Development Goals are available, including: International Council for Science, "A guide to SDG interactions: from science to implementation" (Paris, 2017); Nippon Foundation — Nereus Programme, "Oceans and the Sustainable Development Goals: co-benefits, climate change and social equity" (Nereus Programme, 2017); and David Le Blanc, Clovis Freire and Marjo Vierros, "Mapping the linkages between oceans and other Sustainable Development Goals: a preliminary exploration", Department of Economic and Social Affairs working paper No. 149 (February 2017).

(c) Socioeconomic consequences of continued change in the system.

7. Key remaining knowledge gaps

A synopsis of remaining knowledge gaps and any regional aspects associated with the theme of the chapter.

8. Key remaining capacity-building gaps

A synopsis of the main remaining capacity-building gaps in the field.

Source table

Each chapter is to provide, as a minimum, a table showing a synopsis of the data and information used for the assessment, supporting transparency in each chapter assessment and allowing for compatibility and comparability of future assessments with the current assessment (this could also be included as an appendix). This is in addition to any necessary references.

Enclosure II

Designations of lead members and co-lead members

Note by the Joint Coordinators

The present note contains the list of the lead and co-lead members for the chapters of the outline for the second world ocean assessment. It has been revised in the light of the following:

(a) The conclusions of the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, at its meeting held on 24 May 2018, that:

(i) The Joint Coordinators should be designated as lead members for chapter 1 (summary), with the rest of the Group of Experts as co-lead members;

(ii) There should be at least one co-lead member for every other chapter;

(b) The intended appointment of Henn Ojaveer (Estonia) to the Group of Experts on the nomination of the Eastern European States;

(c) Further comments from members of the Group of Experts.

Chap. No.	*Short description of topic*	*Lead member(s)*	*Co-lead member(s)*
1	Summary	Renison Ruwa and Alan Simcock	Maria Bebiano, Hilconida Calumpong, Sanae Chiba, Marco Espino, Karen Evans, Carlos García Soto, Osman Keh Kamara, Enrique Marschoff, Michelle McClure, Essam Mohammed, Henn Ojaveer, Chul Park, Ylenia Randrianarisoa, Anastasia Strati, Joshua Tuhumwire, Ca Thanh Vu, Juying Wang and Tymon Zielinski
2	Approach to the assessment	Alan Simcock	Carlos García Soto
3	Scientific understanding	Renison Ruwa	Sanae Chiba, Carlos García Soto and Tymon Zielinski
4	Drivers	Renison Ruwa	Osman Keh Kamara
5	Physical and chemical state of the ocean	Carlos García Soto	Karen Evans, Juying Wang and Tymon Zielinski
6	Biota diversity	Chul Park	Hilconida Calumpong, Karen Evans and Michelle McClure
7	Habitat diversity	Hilconida Calumpong	Sanae Chiba, Karen Evans, Michelle McClure, Enrique Marschoff, Renison Ruwa and Joshua Tuhumwire
8	Human society	Alan Simcock	Osman Keh Kamara, Essam Mohammed and Anastasia Strati
9	Climate pressures	Karen Evans	Sanae Chiba, Carlos García Soto, Michelle McClure and Ca Thanh Vu
10	Nutrient pollution	Juying Wang	Maria Bebiano

Chap. No.	*Short description of topic*	*Lead member(s)*	*Co-lead member(s)*
11	Chemical pollution	Maria Bebiano	Alan Simcock and Juying Wang
12	Solid waste	Maria Bebiano	Ca Thanh Vu and Juying Wang
13	Sedimentation	Ca Thanh Vu	Joshua Tuhumwire
14	Infrastructure	Ca Thanh Vu	Alan Simcock
15	Capture fisheries	Michelle McClure	Karen Evans, Enrique Marschoff, Essam Mohammed and Ylenia Randrianisoa
16	Aquaculture	Enrique Marschoff	Renison Ruwa
17	Seaweed	Hilconida Calumpong	Renison Ruwa
18	Salt	Alan Simcock	Carlos García Soto
19	Seabed mining	Joshua Tuhumwire	Maria Bebiano and Anastasia Strati
20	Offshore hydrocarbons	Joshua Tuhumwire	Alan Simcock
21	Noise	Karen Evans	Carlos García Soto
22	Renewable energy	Anastasia Strati	Carlos García Soto and Osman Keh Kamara
23	Shipping	Alan Simcock	Osman Keh Kamara
24	Tourism	Alan Simcock	Anastasia Strati
25	Invasive species	Chul Park	Henn Ojaveer and Renison Ruwa
26	Marine genetic resources	Sanae Chiba	Hilconida Calumpong
27	Marine hydrates	Alan Simcock	Carlos García Soto and Joshua Tuhumwire
28	Cumulative impacts	Karen Evans	Essam Mohammed and Alan Simcock
29	Marine spatial planning	Alan Simcock	Karen Evans and Ca Thanh Vu
30	Management approaches	Anastasia Strati	Hilconida Calumpong, Karen Evans, Essam Mohammed and Ca Thanh Vu
31	Overall benefits	Essam Mohammed	Osman Keh Kamara and Anastasia Strati
	Infographics	Sanae Chiba	

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The situation in Afghanistan

Security Council
Seventy-third year

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/11 and Security Council resolution 2405 (2018), in which the Secretary-General was requested to report every three months on developments in Afghanistan.

2. The report provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Afghanistan, including political, humanitarian, development and human rights efforts, since the issuance of the previous report, on 6 June 2018 (A/72/888-S/2018/539).

II. Relevant developments

3. Political mobilization intensified as opposition groups formed coalitions ahead of parliamentary elections, scheduled for 20 October. A diverse group of political parties continued to demand electoral reforms, with some threatening an electoral boycott if their demands were not met. Following a long series of negotiations with the Government, the First Vice-President, Abdul Rashid Dostum, returned to Afghanistan after having resided in Turkey for over a year. The electoral management bodies continued preparations for parliamentary elections, although it was proposed that district council elections, initially scheduled for the same date, be postponed because of low numbers of candidate nominations. The Government and the Taliban implemented overlapping ceasefires over the Eid al-Fitr holiday, resulting in a three-day drop in violence and public meetings between government and Taliban loyalists. However, the Taliban rejected calls for an extension of the ceasefire, and both sides resumed offensive operations. The Government declared a second ceasefire for the Eid al-Adha holiday, on the condition that the Taliban reciprocate, but it did not. Security remained volatile, with attacks in Ghazni Province and across northern areas, and civilian casualties continued at very high levels. The Government continued its

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reform efforts in preparation for the Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan, to be held on 28 November, finalized its subnational governance policy and completed a mass, merit-based recruitment exercise for the civil service. Drought conditions continued to destroy livelihoods and caused additional population displacement in western Afghanistan. A record number of returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran had so far been recorded in 2018, while returns from Pakistan remained relatively low.

A. Political developments

4. The mobilization of the political opposition described in my previous report intensified as parliamentary elections drew near and difficulties in the process became clearer. Where previously it appeared that the mobilization had been for the purpose of participating in the election, opposition parties increasingly began to criticize the process itself. Parties were particularly sceptical of the announcement by the Independent Election Commission that more than 9 million voters had been registered. Calls for an interim administration to replace the National Unity Government, previously a fringe position, began to emerge within the political mainstream.

5. Discontent over electoral preparations was largely focused in the North, where security conditions continued to deteriorate, and some opposition figures accused the Government of a deliberate plot to disenfranchise northern communities. That perception was exacerbated following the arrest by Government forces on 2 July of Nezamuddin Qaysari, a district chief of police and close associate of Mr. Dostum in Faryab Province. The arrest triggered protests in the Uzbek-majority Faryab Province that quickly spread to other northern provinces, including Balkh, Jowzjan, Kunduz, Samangan, Sari Pul and Takhar. Protestors demanded the release of Mr. Qaysari and the return of Mr. Dostum, who had resided in Turkey since May 2017, with some warning that they would boycott elections and form an autonomous government if their demands were not met. When the Government refused to address the demands, protestors began to block the Kabul to Mazar-e Sharif Highway in Samangan Province, forced the closure of the provincial offices of the Independent Election Commission in six provinces and blocked the road leading from the important land port at Maymana. After two weeks of mounting instability, the Government began negotiations with the Junbesh-i Milli political party over the return of the First Vice-President. As part of the negotiations, Mr. Qaysari was released from prison on 21 July and returned to a mutually agreed location, accompanied by guards from the National Directorate of Security and from Junbesh-i Milli.

6. Following negotiations with representatives of the Presidential Palace, Mr. Dostum returned to Kabul on 22 July. He was greeted by a large gathering of political figures, including the former governor of Balkh Province, Atta Noor, and Second Chief Executive Officer, Mohammad Mohaqeq. Speaking at the gathering, Mr. Dostum announced his intention to work with the Government on peace and elections. Following Mr. Dostum's return, the protests in the North immediately subsided, allowing the reopening of borders, highways and Government offices in six provinces. There were no developments in the legal proceedings against Mr. Dostum, who remained under indictment for the alleged sexual assault of a political rival in 2016.

7. Following months of negotiations between opposition groups, the Grand National Coalition of Afghanistan was launched in Kabul on 26 July. The new Coalition brought together members of the former Coalition for the Salvation of Afghanistan, also known as the Ankara Alliance, including Mr. Dostum, Mr. Noor and Mr. Mohaqeq, as well as representatives of other political parties and formerly

unaligned opponents of the Government. This demonstrated a further expansion of the original base of the Ankara Alliance, which had originally been conceived as a largely northern, non-Pashtun and former jihadi grouping. The former President, Hamid Karzai, endorsed the objectives of the Coalition, although he did not formally join the group.

8. A separate but overlapping coalition of 27 political parties, first established in March, continued to demand changes to the electoral system and to cast doubt on the independence of the Independent Election Commission. As the voter registration process ended, the group demanded that the voter list be invalidated and that biometric voter registration take place. However, the Commission responded that those demands were impossible to implement before the October elections. A series of discussions convened by the Second Vice-President, Sarwar Danesh, with the Commission and the group towards the end of July and beginning of August were inconclusive. As negotiations faltered, the parties threatened to boycott or obstruct the holding of elections if their demands were not met. Some members joined former President Karzai in calling for the establishment of an interim administration.

9. The appointment on 19 July of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Independent Election Commission aided preparations for the parliamentary elections scheduled for 20 October, as the crucial post had been vacant since late in 2017. Voter registration, which had begun in provincial centres on 14 April, was subsequently extended to districts and rural areas, and ended on 27 July. The Commission announced that around 9.5 million voters had been registered, of which 34 per cent were women. Once registration was complete, the Commission began digitizing the records to create a single list of voters that could be checked for duplication and disaggregated by polling station. Opposition parties and many political figures have cast doubt on the credibility of the number of voters registered, citing poor security conditions and alleging fraud.

10. Protests over the past and likely future disenfranchisement due to insecurity in Ghazni Province prevented electoral preparations, as representatives of the Pashtun and Tajik communities held protests demanding the Province be divided into smaller electoral constituencies. Protesters blocked the provincial election commission's office throughout the registration period, preventing both voter registration and candidate nomination. On 25 June, the Independent Election Commission decided to divide Ghazni into three electoral constituencies as a possible solution to the disenfranchisement concerns. However, the decision failed to appease the protestors and triggered counter-protests by the Hazara community, resulting in the continued closure of the provincial office of the Commission.

11. The registration of candidates for parliamentary and district council elections ended on 12 and 14 June, respectively, with a preliminary list of parliamentary candidates for 33 provinces published on 2 July. However, candidate numbers for district council elections were low, with only 40 out of 387 districts presenting a sufficient number of candidates to hold competitive elections. The lack of candidates was mostly due to insecurity, restrictive educational requirements (high school diploma) and a lack of clarity regarding the functions of district councils. On 29 July, the Independent Election Commission formally proposed that district council elections and parliamentary elections for Ghazni Province be postponed under article 104 of the Election Law, which allows for the postponement of elections for reasons of insecurity or other conditions that make holding fair elections impossible. The case was referred to a special committee made up of the National Security Council, the speakers of the two houses of parliament, the Chief Justice and the Chair of the Independent Commission for Oversight of the Implementation of the Constitution, for a final decision.

12. On 27 July, the President appointed 102 commissioners of the provincial offices of the Electoral Complaints Commission, three months after the legally established deadline. As a result of the delayed appointment of commissioners, out of 680 complaints received, only 240 had been adjudicated as at 20 August. In the meantime, according to the provisions of the 2016 Electoral Law, a vetting commission was established, composed of representatives from the Electoral Complaints Commission, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance, the Ministry of the Interior and the National Directorate of Security, to identify and remove candidates with links to illegal armed groups. On 4 August, the vetting commission informed 25 candidates that they had been excluded from contesting the election owing to their links with illegal armed groups. Following a review period for those candidates recommended for disqualification, the Electoral Complaints Commission announced on 10 August that a total of 35 candidates had been disqualified. Following the announcement of the final list of candidates, a number of supporters of disqualified candidates began to stage protests in Kabul and around the country. Those protests led to the closure of the Independent Election Commission headquarters compound in Kabul and, as at 21 August, nine provincial offices of the Independent Election Commission, in Badakhshan, Gardez, Kabul, Kunduz, Logar, Parwan, Pul-i-Khumri, Samangan and Takhar. The closure of the Independent Election Commission headquarters effectively halted the process of entering data in the voter registry and the retrieval of voter registration books from a number of provinces, among other electoral preparations. On 8 August, President Ghani issued a decree on ensuring the impartiality of government officials and institutions in elections and the security of the electoral process.

13. The Independent Election Commission approved its gender policy to enhance the participation of women in elections and accredited 17 civil society organizations, 15 media organizations and 20 political parties to monitor and observe all parts of the electoral process. Of the 2,564 candidates for the lower house, the *Wolesi Jirga*, 391 were women.

14. To support preparations for the 2018 elections, the United Nations and the electoral management bodies signed on 25 July a revised Electoral Support Project document, with the donors pledging an additional $57 million in financial support.

15. The momentum in support of a peace process with the Taliban continued, aided by the increasingly active engagement of civil society and religious leaders calling for peace between the Government and the Taliban. Representatives of the People's Peace Movement, which began as a series of sit-ins in southern Afghanistan, marched from Lashkar Gah in Helmand Province, passing through Kandahar, Zabul, Ghazni and Wardak Provinces before reaching Kabul on 18 June. In Kabul, the group staged a series of sit-ins in front of the embassies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, as well as a compound of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), before undertaking a march to Balkh Province. Religious leaders also took on a more public role in advocating for a peace process. In a gathering on 4 June in Kabul, more than 3,000 religious scholars issued a fatwa declaring the insurgency against the Government of Afghanistan to be illegitimate, and calling on the Taliban to join peace negotiations. That was followed on 10 and 11 July by a gathering in Saudi Arabia of religious leaders from more than 30 countries, in which participants again expressed their support for peace in Afghanistan.

16. Bolstered by pro-peace developments in the civic sphere, signs of flexibility emerged among the main parties to the conflict. On 7 June, President Ghani announced a unilateral eight-day cessation of hostilities with the Taliban beginning on 12 June, to mark the Eid al-Fitr holiday. Two days later, the Taliban issued its own

declaration of a three-day ceasefire over the holiday period from 15 to 17 June. The ensuing three days of overlapping ceasefires witnessed a significant drop in violent incidents, with the only major exceptions being two suicide attacks in Jalalabad on 16 and 17 June, both claimed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP). Taliban fighters entered government-controlled areas throughout the country, and unprecedented public meetings took place in many provinces between Government officials and Taliban leaders. On 16 June, the Government announced that the ceasefire would be extended for a further 10 days following the holiday. The Taliban rejected an extension of its ceasefire and, on 18 June, relaunched offensive operations. While the ceasefires were largely greeted with enthusiasm on social media, some political figures and civil society organizations criticized the Government for the unilateral extension of the ceasefire. On 30 June, President Ghani announced the official end of the Government's ceasefire and stated that the Government would like to begin an intra-Afghan dialogue as soon as possible, followed by a second phase involving regional countries, the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

17. In the following weeks, media reports emerged of direct talks between the United States and the Taliban. Despite that reported development, and further accounts of increasing informal contact between all parties, direct peace negotiations between the Government and the Taliban did not materialize during the reporting period.

18. On 19 August, President Ghani announced a second ceasefire, beginning on the eve of the Eid al-Adha holiday on 20 August through the holiday of Milad ul-Nabi on 19 November. However, the ceasefire was conditional on the announcement of a similar ceasefire by the Taliban, which did not formally respond. The Government's announcement was welcomed by members of the international community, including Pakistan, the United States and NATO, but generated controversy on social media and sparked a small demonstration in Kabul.

19. The Government made limited progress on the implementation of its September 2016 peace agreement with Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin. On 25 July, representatives of the group met with representatives of the NATO Resolute Support Mission to discuss a list of 59 outstanding prisoners proposed for release by Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin. However, repeated requests for their release were rejected, largely owing to insufficient guarantees that the released prisoners would not rejoin the insurgency. On 28 July, members of the joint executive secretariat for the implementation of the agreement met with representatives of the National Directorate for Security, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence to discuss implementation of the agreement, including future prisoner releases and land allocation, as well as the possible effect of a recent wave of security sector retirements on security personnel affiliated with Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin.

B. Security

20. The security situation remained volatile, with continuing high numbers of incidents briefly interrupted by the reduction in violence during the Eid al-Fitr ceasefires. Between 15 May and 15 August, UNAMA recorded a total of 5,800 security incidents, a 10 per cent decrease compared with the same period in 2017. The southern region saw the highest number of incidents followed by the eastern and south-eastern regions, with those three regions accounting for 67 per cent of all incidents. Although armed clashes continued to make up the largest number of security incidents (61 per cent of all incidents), the number of armed clashes fell by 14 per cent compared with the same period in 2017. In terms of other incident categories, suicide attacks increased by 38 per cent and air strikes by the Afghan Air

Force and international military forces increased by 46 per cent compared with the same period in 2017.

21. Concerns remained over deteriorating security conditions in the north. The Government's control over territory decreased in Faryab Province, as the Taliban captured three district administrative centres and overran the Afghan National Army base in Ghormach over a one-week period in August. High levels of ground engagements were recorded in Balkh, Faryab and Jowzjan Provinces, while incidents along the main ring road had a negative impact on movement between the capitals of the three provinces. In total, the northern region recorded 17 per cent more security incidents over the first half of 2018 than in the same period in 2017.

22. The overall level of violence decreased significantly during the Eid al-Fitr ceasefires, bookended by spikes in armed clashes in the preceding and following weeks. Over the week incorporating the holiday, UNAMA recorded a total of 285 incidents, the lowest level of violence in a one-week period since the 2014 security transition. However, the weeks following the ceasefire again saw a rise in Taliban-initiated armed clashes, as the movement sought to regain the offensive following the unprecedented events of Eid.

23. There were no sustained changes in territorial control between the Government and the Taliban during the reporting period. The Taliban mounted a number of attacks against district administrative centres, temporarily taking control of Jaghatu and Deh Yak in Ghazni Province, Tala Wa Barfak and Burkah in Baghlan Province and Atghar in Zabul Province, before withdrawing following counter-attacks by Afghan national security forces, often supported by international military airstrikes. On 10 August, the Taliban launched a large-scale attack against the capital of Ghazni Province, Ghazni City. Fighting lasted five days before the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces pushed Taliban fighters to the edge of the city. Additional reports were received of attacks against the Deh Yak, Khwajah Omari and Ajrestan district administrative centres in Ghazni Province, and of Taliban ambushes against reinforcements travelling to Ghazni in Zabul, Wardak and Logar Provinces. The main highway from Kabul to Kandahar cities continued to see high levels of insecurity.

24. ISIL-KP remained a significant presence in the eastern region, claiming responsibility for eight suicide and complex attacks in Nangarhar Province during the reporting period, two attacks in Kabul and one in Gardez City. ISIL-KP continued to fight against the Taliban in the East, with armed clashes reported in Nangarhar and Kunar Provinces. International military forces continued to target ISIL-KP in Nangarhar Province, conducting a series of air strikes against ISIL-KP targets in Deh Bala, Achin, Khugyani, Naziyan and Chaparhar districts of Nangarhar Province. On 1 August, a large group of fighters proclaiming affiliation with ISIL-KP surrendered to the Government in Jowzjan Province, following a series of fierce battles against Taliban forces. The incident allowed the Taliban to consolidate its position as the pre-eminent insurgent force in Jowzjan and represented a blow to the attempt by ISIL-KP to gain a foothold in the country's north.

25. The Government continued its efforts to implement security sector reform in accordance with its four-year road map. Under the Inherent Law of 2017, 656 generals have been retired from the Afghan National Army in an attempt to promote generational change, rebalance the distribution of ranks and foster stronger leadership. The reforms were expanded to the Ministry of the Interior, with the first of two planned tranches of retirements initiated in July. The Afghan National Police also continued to roll out the verification of personnel, which began on 15 April. The process, which includes biometric registration and proof of vetting of Police personnel, remained ongoing as at August 2018.

26. Contributor countries to the NATO Resolute Support Mission met on 11 and 12 July in Brussels. Reaffirming their commitment to lasting security in Afghanistan, NATO allies and partners announced their commitment to sustain the non-combat mission until conditions indicate that a change in the mission is appropriate. They also agreed to extend financial support for Afghan forces through 2024. NATO emphasized the stability of Afghanistan in the context of the Central Asian region and the role of regional actors in achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan by fully supporting a negotiated political solution.

27. In total, 12 incidents involving United Nations personnel were reported, including 5 cases of intimidation, 1 assassination and 1 improvised explosive device-related incident. A contractor working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was killed during a complex attack on 31 July on a government facility in Jalalabad City.

C. Regional cooperation

28. The momentum towards a consolidated regional approach to peace in Afghanistan, generated by the second meeting of the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation, held on 28 February, and the conference held in Tashkent on 26 and 27 March, continued during the reporting period. On 17 July, a delegation from Qatar visited Uzbekistan, where representatives of the two countries discussed implementing the provisions of the Tashkent Declaration on Fundamental Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan reiterated its offer to host direct talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. On 23 July, Qatar hosted a quadrilateral meeting of national security advisers from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the United States to discuss the Afghan peace process, countering the financing of terrorism and other aspects of regional cooperation. From 7 to 10 August, a delegation from the Qatar-based Taliban Political Commission visited Uzbekistan, where they met with the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov.

29. Progress was made on the implementation of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity, which was finalized in May 2018. Meeting in Pakistan on 11 June, Afghan and Pakistani directors-general of military operations agreed to deploy liaison officers in each other's capitals and establish coordination centres to share intelligence. High-level visits between the countries' security institutions continued, for the purpose of increasing cooperation on peace in Afghanistan and bilateral security issues. On 22 July, the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan visited Kabul. Following the election of Imran Khan as Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Prime Minister-elect gave a public address indicating that Pakistan would prioritize peace in Afghanistan. Cross-border shelling continues to be a concerning bilateral issue.

30. Multilateral efforts to improve regional cooperation continued. During the 18th Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit, held from 9 to 10 June in Qingdao, China, the importance was underlined of the contact group between the Organization and Afghanistan. Participants reiterated the need for socioeconomic development based on priorities of the Afghan people and greater connectivity and regional integration for Afghanistan. In the press communiqué of the Summit, members of the Organization expressed their support for the mediation of the conflict in Afghanistan and cooperation in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism. On 2 July, Afghanistan hosted an ambassadorial meeting of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process. Participating countries assessed the progress made towards achieving the recommendations agreed upon on 19 April at the senior officials meeting, including the expansion of economic cooperation and the reinvigoration of confidence-building measures.

III. Human rights

31. On 15 July, UNAMA released its 2018 midyear update on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.[1] The Mission documented 5,122 civilian casualties (1,692 people killed and 3,430 injured) between 1 January and 30 June 2018, the highest number of civilian deaths recorded in a six-month period since UNAMA began systematic documentation in 2009. Overall levels of civilian harm were similar to the same period in 2017. UNAMA attributed 67 per cent of all civilian casualties to anti-government elements (42 per cent to the Taliban, 18 per cent to ISIL-KP, 7 per cent to unidentified anti-government elements, including self-proclaimed ISIL-KP), 20 per cent to pro-government forces, 10 per cent to unattributed crossfire during ground engagements between anti-government elements and pro-government forces, and 3 per cent to other incidents, including explosive remnants of war and cross-border shelling.

32. The use of improvised explosive device tactics (including suicide and non-suicide attacks) caused 2,290 civilian casualties (659 people killed and 1,631 injured) and was the leading cause of such casualties during the first half of 2018, accounting for 45 per cent of civilian casualties. Ground engagements, the second leading cause, accounted for 1,494 civilian casualties (360 people killed and 1,134 injured), amounting to 29 per cent of all civilian casualties. UNAMA continued to document high levels of civilian casualties from aerial strikes by pro-government forces, recording 353 civilian casualties (149 people killed and 204 injured), with women and children comprising more than half of those casualties. UNAMA documented 1,355 child casualties (363 children killed and 992 injured), accounting for 24 per cent of all civilian casualties. Women casualties decreased by 15 per cent, with a total of 157 women killed and 387 injured. More than half of the women casualties were caused by ground engagements.

33. Attacks targeting election-related sites from April to June resulted in 341 civilian casualties (117 people killed and 224 injured), most of which (over 250 casualties) resulted from two attacks, in Kabul City on 22 April and in Khost Province on 6 May. UNAMA documented attacks on *tazkira* (national identification card) distribution centres and voter registration sites, as well as attacks against election-related personnel. It also recorded threats, abductions and killings of candidates and their supporters.

34. From 1 April to 30 June, the country task force on monitoring and reporting verified 79 attacks against schools and education-related personnel, including 44 election-related incidents affecting schools, 24 direct attacks on schools, 7 threats against schools and related personnel and 4 attacks against education-related personnel. The task force attributed 73 incidents to anti-government elements (47 to the Taliban, 18 to ISIL-KP, including 1 to self-proclaimed ISIL-KP, and 7 to undetermined anti-government elements), 4 to Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and 2 jointly to Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and the Taliban during crossfire. The sharp increase in attacks against schools and education-related personnel, up from 11 such incidents in the previous reporting period, is due to the use of schools as voter registration centres and the targeting of education facilities by anti-government elements, apparently in reaction to military operations by pro-government forces. In addition, the task force verified the military use of one school by the Afghan National Army.

35. The task force verified 12 attacks against health facilities and health-care personnel, including 9 attacks against health-care facilities and 3 against health-care

[1] UNAMA, "Midyear update on the protection of civilians in armed conflict: 1 January to 30 June 2018" (Kabul, 2018).

workers, compared with 16 incidents in the previous reporting period. The task force attributed 7 incidents to armed groups (4 to the Taliban, 2 to undetermined anti-government elements and 1 to self-proclaimed ISIL-KP), 2 jointly to international military forces and Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, 1 each to pro-government militia and the Afghan National Police, and 1 jointly to the Afghan National Army and Taliban during crossfire. The task force verified the recruitment and use of two boys by parties to the conflict and documented credible allegations of the recruitment and use of four boys by the Taliban and one boy by the National Directorate of Security and the Taliban. In addition, the task force documented credible allegations of three cases of sexual abuse involving three boys, including for the purpose of *bacha bazi*, attributed to the Afghan National Police and Afghan Local Police.

36. In late May, UNAMA submitted to the Government and selected stakeholders a confidential report in which it documented Afghan communities' awareness of and observations on the prevalence of the recruitment and use of children by parties to the conflict, and the root causes and enabling factors driving such practices in Afghanistan. The report was based on almost 700 interviews as well as monitoring conducted by UNAMA human rights teams between 15 October 2016 and 31 December 2017. The report highlighted the fact that the practice of child recruitment and use is perceived as common in Afghanistan, with the Taliban reported to be the main perpetrators. Communities in all regions of Afghanistan further alleged the use of boys for the purpose of sexual abuse, including *bacha bazi*, by armed forces, in particular the Afghan Local Police and Afghan National Police, and identified poverty and unemployment as underlying causes.

37. Following the criminalization of *bacha bazi* in the new Penal Code, UNAMA hosted an event on 6 August aimed at developing strategies on accountability for that crime and to strengthen responses for victims. Participants included representatives from the Government, the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, and international military forces. While not all participants agreed on the extent of the problem and ways in which to address it, all acknowledged the need for sensitization and awareness-raising among the Afghan population and within the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces concerning the criminalization of *bacha bazi*. Suggestions for follow-up included the adoption of a strategy and action plan to look more comprehensively into the issue.

38. The Government, with the support of UNAMA, continued efforts to address violence against women. On 29 May, the Mission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) launched a report[2] that highlighted the human rights concerns arising from the use of mediation in cases of violence against women. In June, the Government established the High Commission on the Elimination of Harassment against Women and Children to improve implementation of the 2017 Anti-Harassment of Women and Children Law. The Government also took steps to increase the role of women in promoting peace and security. On 17 July, UNAMA facilitated a national conference to build consensus around taking action to ensure accountability for acts of violence against women. On 29 July, the President nominated a female judge to the Afghanistan Supreme Court High Council. If appointed, she will be the first woman to hold that post. On 31 July, the Government launched its second status report on the implementation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), noting an overall increase in the recruitment of women in the security sector. However, the report also

[2] UNAMA and OHCHR, "Injustice and Impunity: Mediation of Criminal Offences of Violence against Women" (May 2018), available from www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/AF/UNAMA_OHCHR_EVAW_Report2018_InjusticeImpunity29May2018.pdf.

noted some negative trends, including a decrease in the number of women officers in the Afghan National Army and fewer female members of the High Peace Council.

39. On 26 June, the Government submitted its one-year follow-up report on action taken on three specific recommendations made by the Committee against Torture in its concluding observations on the second periodic review of Afghanistan (CAT/C/AFG/CO/2). The Law on the Prohibition of Torture was reviewed and approved by the National Assembly and awaits final endorsement by the President.

40. As of 30 June, the terms of office of the Commissioners of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission had expired. On 9 July, an earlier presidential order of 26 May 2018 setting out the procedure for the identification and selection of new Commissioners was amended by the President, establishing a two-tier vetting system to ensure diversity among a final pool of 27 applicants. The United Nations no longer observes proceedings under the revised order, and the appointment of the nine Commissioners remains the prerogative of the President alone. The vacancies for the nine Commissioners were published on 15 August and were set to close on 3 September. Journalists and media workers continued to face intimidation and harassment by anti-government elements and pro-government forces. UNAMA documented four incidents of harassment and intimidation in Ghazni, Helmand and Kandahar Provinces.

IV. Coordination of development assistance

41. The Government made some progress towards implementing its reform commitments. On 2 June, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance finalized its implementation plan of the citizen-centred policy for subnational governance, which had been approved on 14 May by the High Council for Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption. The plan provides much-needed clarification of the roles of central and provincial authorities and gives details on the new reforms on subnational planning, financing and natural resources management. The Government also made some progress towards improving the capacity of the civil service at the provincial level. On 25 July, the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission reported the completion of the mass-recruitment process for civil servant positions, including teachers in the provinces, which had been initiated in January 2018. As a result, 11,176 civil servants were recruited to fill vacant positions in 33 provinces. Those reforms have begun to address the longstanding gaps between the central and the subnational governance units that have undermined the legitimacy of the Government at the local level.

42. The Government also continued its efforts to improve the institutional framework that guides its anti-corruption efforts. On 4 June, the President appointed a new Deputy Attorney General for Anti-Corruption. The draft anti-corruption law was finalized and sent to the Office of the Second Vice-President for review. Since the previous report, the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre has tried an additional four cases, bringing the overall caseload of the Centre since it was established in 2016 to 38 cases involving 152 accused persons. As a product of the 24 completed cases, 71 people have been convicted and imprisoned after a final decision by the Supreme Court. However, international partners have expressed their concern about the declining performance of the Centre, including its stagnating caseload, the low level of cases tried by the Centre and the frequent non-enforcement of arrest warrants by the Ministry of the Interior, which means that a high number of cases continue to be tried in absentia without consequences for those who are convicted.

43. On 30 June, UNAMA completed a three-month survey on the implementation of the new Penal Code, which came into force on 14 February 2018. The survey report

will be shared with the international community as well as training institutes of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General and the Ministry of Justice to identify gaps and adjust an ongoing training programme on the Code. The regional courts and prosecution offices were given 1,219 additional copies of the new Penal Code, with the support of UNAMA. An additional 484 copies were printed by the Ministry of Justice and delivered to 22 of the 34 provinces.

44. The Government continued to prioritize private sector reform in an effort to stimulate economic growth and rebalance the private and public sectors. However, growth remained slow, placing at risk the country's gradual economic recovery from the shock caused by the large reduction in the international presence as part of the 2014 security transition. In its biannual Afghanistan Development Update, issued on 7 August, the World Bank projected real gross domestic product growth of 2.4 per cent in 2018, down from 2.7 per cent in 2017, citing security challenges, ongoing drought, declining business confidence and political instability as key constraints on growth. The World Bank further expressed concern that on current projections, economic growth will be unable to meet the demand for employment. Figures from the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and International Labour Organization suggest 25 per cent of the labour force in the country is not gainfully employed. Furthermore, projections estimate that 480,000 to 600,000 new entrants to the job market are expected annually until 2025, of which an average of 400,000 are estimated to be young people. With approximately 63.7 per cent of Afghans being under the age of 25 years, the post-2001 "youth bulge" requires significantly more efforts to realize the demographic dividend of that age bracket and thus lift the strain on the labour market.

45. On 18 July, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board convened in Kabul. Discussions focused on six key deliverables agreed with the Government ahead of the Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan, to be held on 28 November. They included: (a) the holding of free, fair and credible parliamentary and district elections; (b) the finalization of all national priority programmes with the cross-cutting issue of women's empowerment and providing basic services, especially education and health; (c) achieving International Monetary Fund benchmarks; (d) creating an enabling environment for private sector-led growth, including enacting the Mining Law and a new Land Allocation Law; (e) making clear progress against corruption, such as serving all outstanding warrants on allegedly corrupt public officials; and (f) making advances on security sector reforms. The Ministry of Finance established a special task force to monitor results.

46. On 12 August in Kabul, the Government and UNAMA officially launched preparations for the Geneva Ministerial Conference. The event, which will focus on development, growth, poverty reduction and reforms, will see the introduction of a new set of accountability parameters, the Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework.

V. Humanitarian assistance and returnees

47. In 2018, 178,002 people were newly displaced by conflict. Between 15 May and 15 August, 31,825 people were displaced. Although conflict-related displacement is down by more than one third compared with the same period in 2017, many displaced families have been forced to move multiple times and have no immediate prospect of returning to their areas of origin in safety and dignity. During the reporting period, humanitarian partners provided food and other life-saving assistance to 157,684 people displaced by conflict.

48. The demand for trauma care for victims of war increased to 24,687 cases in 2018, an increase of 14 per cent compared with 2017. Needs are particularly high in

Helmand, Kunar, Kunduz and Takhar Provinces, where clashes have taken heavy tolls and access has been reduced. During the reporting period, the 15 partners of the health cluster provided consultations to 584,934 people, of whom 61 per cent were women and girls.

49. Explosive remnants of war and victim-operated improvised explosive devices remain the leading causes of civilian casualties in Afghanistan, with 553 civilian casualties in the first six months of 2018. Currently, 89 per cent of all victims are children. In response, the United Nations and its partners have developed child-friendly materials on explosive remnants of war for initial use in 12 villages, as well as three child-friendly spaces. From January to June 2018, mine action partners removed or destroyed 6,878 explosive remnants of war from battlefields and communities across the country, although the ongoing nature of the conflict continues to increase significantly the contamination and threat levels.

50. Three cases of polio were confirmed during the reporting period, bringing the total number of cases in 2018 to 11. The latest transmissions were reported from two districts (Nad-e-Ali in Helmand Province and Tsowkey in Kunar Province). In total, four provinces have been affected in 2018 (Helmand, Kandahar, Kunar and Nangarhar). In July, the first polio vaccination campaign was carried out during the high-transmission season, and 6,003,849 children aged under 5 years living in high-risk areas were vaccinated.

51. As at 4 August, drought affected 229 out of 401 districts across the country. In Badghis Province, more than 100,000 people have been forced from rural areas to urban centres in Badghis, Ghor and Herat Provinces since early in May. Most of the newly displaced people live in informal settlements with few, if any, basic social services. Rural communities have depleted their assets, selling off livestock to buy food and consuming the coming planting season's seeds. A nationwide emergency assessment is planned to review the chronic food security situation, which is expected to worsen as much of the country enters an early lean season in September. An estimated 1.4 million people are expected to need life-saving emergency assistance in the coming months.

52. Families displaced to urban centres by drought received the same emergency assistance from the United Nations and partners as people displaced by conflict. Food was also provided to families in rural areas to prevent further drought-related displacement. From July to September 2018, the United Nations and its partners were expected to provide food assistance to 441,000 people in Badghis, Faryab, Ghor, Herat and Jowzjan Provinces, which were the worst affected. Beginning late in September 2018, United Nations and its partners will expand the support for at least six months to all of the estimated 1.4 million people in need in 20 provinces due to drought.

53. In order to meet those emergency demands, the Government has mobilized 60,000 tons of wheat grain from its own strategic grain reserves, while the United Nations is procuring complementary commodities from international markets. Based on United Nations estimates, half a million people are in dire need of agriculture- and livestock-based livelihoods support, through the distribution of seeds, fertilizers and fodder. To complement the humanitarian response, development actors are mobilizing their resources and operations under ongoing projects in six provinces relating to climate change adaptation, agricultural value chains and rural development so that they also support community recovery and long-term resilience to drought. The United Nations also plans to carry out clearance activities in Farah Province to increase land availability and lessen the burden of drought-induced displacement on host communities and critical resources. Clearance operations in Kandahar have

enabled the construction of new residential areas, assisting with land access for returnees from Pakistan.

54. A total of 210,724 Afghan citizens, including spontaneous returnees, deportees and refugees, returned to Afghanistan during the reporting period. According to IOM, from 14 May to 18 August 2018, 7,433 undocumented returnees arrived from Pakistan and 198,954 from the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the same period, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees assisted the return of 3,859 refugees from Pakistan, 446 from the Islamic Republic of Iran and 32 from other countries. The number of registered refugees returning to Afghanistan is significantly lower than the 43,208 who had returned by the same time in 2017. The number of undocumented returns from the Islamic Republic of Iran has soared, with more than 480,000 returnees and deportees in 2018 compared with 215,000 in 2017, in an apparent response to the worsening economic situation there. Humanitarian agencies are trying to reach returnees and provide them with a package of food, cash and other basic necessities to facilitate their reintegration.

55. There continues to be constraints on humanitarian access, with a total of 130 incidents affecting the United Nations and its humanitarian partners from 15 May to 15 August. Since the beginning of the year, a total of 253 incidents have been recorded, including the killings of 23 aid workers. Moreover, 37 have been injured, 74 abducted and 38 detained. The trend of more violent and deliberate attacks on health facilities and health workers has continued. During the reporting period, the task force on monitoring and reporting humanitarian access reported nine incidents where such access was denied, including seven by the Taliban, one by ISIL-KP and one by pro-government militia, compared with 18 such incidents in the previous quarter. Deminers face an increasing risk of kidnapping and armed violence. During the reporting period, two significant incidents occurred, including the first prolonged kidnapping by ISIL-KP. Humanitarian access in contested areas and areas under the control of anti-government elements remained a persistent challenge.

56. The 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan was revised in May to include an additional $117 million to provide assistance to 1.4 million people affected by the drought. Altogether, the revised Plan calls for nearly $547 million and plans to reach 4. 2 million people in 2018. As at 20 August, humanitarian activities in Afghanistan had received $231.1 million in funding, including $175.8 million for activities included in the Plan.

VI. Counter-narcotics

57. During the reporting period, the Government started working on a new national drugs strategy in response to recent increases in opium cultivation and production. Regionally, the new strategy is backed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and its partners under the strategic actions to respond to the global threats of opiates. Aimed at addressing the related threats of crime, terrorism and corruption, the strategic actions encompass a more effective methodology building on the concerted "One UNODC" approach in Europe and Western and Central Asia.

58. The Government, supported by international partners, continued its counter-narcotics operations. During the period from 1 January to 30 June 2018, the Afghan law enforcement authorities conducted a total of 1,804 counter-narcotics operations, leading to seizures of 1,584 kilograms of heroin, 6,767 kilograms of morphine, 12,030 kilograms of opium, 61 kilograms of methamphetamine, 15,426 kilograms of hashish, 10,176 tablets of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), 15,537 kilograms of solid precursor chemicals and 7,774 litres of liquid precursor chemicals. In total, 22 heroin manufacturing laboratories were dismantled; 2,039 suspects were arrested;

and 311 vehicles, 134 weapons and 598 mobile telephones were seized. Three officers of the Afghan Counter-Narcotics Police were killed while carrying out counter-narcotics operations.

VII. Mission support

59. As at 31 July, the Mission's vacancy rates were 10 per cent for international staff, 11 per cent for National Professional Officers and 3 per cent for local-level staff, compared with the approved rates of 11.1 per cent, 8.5 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively. The proportion of female staff remained very low. As at 31 July, the percentage of women in each category of staff stood at 34 per cent for international staff, 38 per cent for United Nations Volunteers, 12 per cent for National Professional Officers and 7 per cent for local-level staff. Between 1 May and 31 July 2018, UNAMA conducted 160 road and 23 air missions, as well as 970 reverse outreach missions, during which district representatives visited UNAMA field offices.

VIII. Observations

60. Afghanistan is nearly in the fifth year its Transformation Decade (2015–2024), which began with the drawdown of international forces in 2014. As it approaches the midpoint, the political, economic and security challenges the country faces remain significant and complex. In addition to low rates of economic growth, high unemployment and rising levels of conflict-related displacement, more immediate problems, such as the ongoing drought, have pushed vulnerable communities to the brink. The conflict continues its unrelenting toll on the civilian population, whose daily struggle amid insecurity is compounded by the inhumanity of terror attacks. As parliamentary and presidential elections near, there is an urgent need for political leaders to demonstrate a unity of purpose and guide Afghanistan towards greater stability and self-reliance.

61. The Eid al-Fitr ceasefire period was a vivid expression of the widespread desire for peace among Afghans. The first ceasefire since 2001, it brought scenes of celebration among Afghan civilians, Afghan national security forces and Taliban fighters alike, proving that Afghans from diverse religious, tribal and civil society groups strongly desire peace. The brevity of the ceasefire period does not undermine its significance, nor do the subsequent attacks that have tested efforts to reach a peaceful settlement. The United Nations emphasizes the need for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Afghanistan and invites all efforts towards that most urgent objective.

62. I regret that the Taliban did not accept the call by the President in his statement on Eid al-Adha to engage in direct negotiations to end the conflict, and that it did not join the Government in the proposed ceasefire. I encourage Member States to cooperate towards achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan, with the aim of direct talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. The United Nations continues to engage with all parties and stands ready to provide all support necessary.

63. I am deeply concerned about the worsening effect of the conflict on the civilian population. In the first half of 2018, the conflict caused the death of 1,692 civilians, the highest number of civilian deaths recorded in a six-month period since UNAMA began its systematic documentation in 2009. The targeting of civilian infrastructure — from schools and hospitals to media offices and aid providers — underscores the violence directed at the fabric of Afghan society. I urge all parties to respect their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law to prevent attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure.

64. Insecurity, violence, poverty and unemployment continue to have a heavy impact on the young people of Afghanistan. I condemn the recent spate of horrific attacks against education facilities, in particular a girls' schools in Nangarhar Province and an education center in Kabul. Such violence, along with the reported closure of schools by anti-Government elements, represents an assault on the fundamental and constitutional right of all Afghans to an education. The criminalization of child-related offences in the new Penal Code is a much-needed step towards protecting the most vulnerable members of society, including from recruitment and use by armed groups, and must be enforced. I applaud the readiness of the Government of Afghanistan to engage on those sensitive topics and all youth-related matters, recognizing the needs of that most sizable age group of the Afghan population. I welcome the selection in June 2018 of the Afghanistan Youth Representative to the United Nations as an opportunity for further engagement, including on the role of the United Nations.

65. I commend the Government on its efforts to improve the capacity of the formal justice system to prosecute and adjudicate cases of violence against women. However, the severe constraints in obtaining redress for sexual and gender-based violence, as well as high levels of de facto impunity affecting all citizens of Afghanistan, highlight the need for continued efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights. I encourage the Afghan authorities to take all measures necessary to support the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in fulfilling its critical role as an effective and independent institution.

66. I am encouraged by the efforts of the electoral management bodies in Afghanistan in preparing under challenging circumstances for the elections scheduled for 20 October 2018. The preparation for the first time of a voter list that links each voter to a polling station is a truly significant step forward in strengthening the integrity of the elections. At the same time, I am concerned about the blockade of the premises of the Independent Election Commission, both at its headquarters and in some provinces, by protestors contesting the exclusion of certain candidates by the Electoral Complaints Commission. Those actions delay the legitimate activities of the Independent Election Commission and do not advance any democratic cause. I call upon the protestors to cease immediately any hindrance to the work of the Independent Election Commission.

67. While timely and credible technical preparations are essential, they cannot, by themselves, solve political concerns. The primary responsibility for a successful election lies with the political leaders from across the political spectrum. That includes the responsibility to engage constructively and peacefully in the process, to prevent and discourage fraud and to refrain from declaring instances of irregularity — or simply unfavourable outcomes — as proof of a fraudulent election. Therefore, I am deeply concerned about the threat of a boycott of the elections.

68. Something valuable is lost when political actors decide to withdraw from an electoral process. It results in fewer options for citizens to participate and have their voice heard, in favour of more narrow expressions of protest or abstention. I therefore urge all political leaders to remain engaged in the electoral process and to pursue concerns and any founded complaints with the national electoral authorities. I encourage the national authorities to continue actively to prevent and detect possible irregularities and to consider evidence of potential malfeasance when presented to them. The United Nations will continue to stand by and assist the electoral authorities of Afghanistan with technical knowledge and other support, in recognition of Afghan leadership and ownership in conducting this sovereign process.

69. This year, Afghanistan is on track to collect enough revenue to cover 50 per cent of its operating budget. While this trend points to the potential for further

development financing and the possibility of generating growth, acute emergency needs are rising, particularly given the levels of internal displacement and the fact that the country is facing its worst drought in 10 years. As discussed at the meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, held in Kabul on 18 July, the complexity of the humanitarian and development issues simultaneously confronting Afghanistan makes the planned discussions at the Geneva Ministerial Conference especially timely.

70. The Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan will provide a valuable opportunity for the international community to renew its political commitment to Afghanistan and for the Government to demonstrate progress on key commitments. The Conference takes place at a critical juncture, halfway between the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in 2016 and the next pledging conference, expected to be held in 2020. As preparations accelerate, I call upon the Government to direct its unified efforts to delivering on key commitments prior to the Geneva Conference.

71. I thank all of the United Nations personnel in Afghanistan and my Special Representative, Tadamichi Yamamoto, for their continued dedication under challenging conditions to fulfilling our commitments in support of the people of Afghanistan.

United Nations A/73/375

General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 September 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Item 78 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Oceans and the law of the sea

Note verbale dated 31 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to the communication addressed to the United Nations by the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, dated 5 July 2018 (A/73/212), has the honour to state the following:

All activities, including the patrol of the vessels of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Persian Gulf, are conducted in accordance with the international law of the sea and within the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The obligations and rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the aforementioned regulations have always been taken into account. On this basis, the groundless claims raised in the above-mentioned communication are categorically and firmly rejected.

It should also be recalled that it is an undisputed historical fact that the full term "Persian Gulf" has always been the only standard geographical designation for the body of water between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula. In this context, the policy and practices of the United Nations in the standardization of the term "Persian Gulf" as the only term applicable to this area are noteworthy and should therefore be respected by all.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always pursued the policy of friendship, good faith and good neighbourliness towards all neighbouring countries in the Persian Gulf region and, on the basis of this fundamental policy, expects the neighbouring countries to follow the same policy.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations would appreciate it if the present note verbale could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 78 (a) of the provisional agenda, and published in the next issue of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

* A/73/150.

18-15007 (E) 110918

Please recycle

United Nations A/73/376

General Assembly

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25 September 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Agenda item 25 (b)
Operational activities for development: South-South cooperation for development

Proposed organization of work of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation

Note by the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 71/318 on the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, requested the Secretary-General to provide a note on the organizational aspects of the Conference, to be held in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019. The present note has been prepared in response to that request.

2. The arrangements set out below have been formulated on the basis of General Assembly resolution 71/318 and decision 72/554.

II. Rules of procedure

3. The draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference, prepared on the basis of the rules of procedure of recent United Nations conferences, are contained in annex I to the present note. The General Assembly is invited to recommend their adoption at the opening of the Conference.

III. Provisional agenda

4. The draft provisional agenda of the Conference is contained in annex II to the present note. The General Assembly is invited to recommend that it be adopted by the Conference at its opening meeting.

18-15003 (E) 021018

Please recycle

IV. Organization of work

Dates and venue

5. The Conference will be held at the Buenos Aires Exhibition and Convention Centre from 20 to 22 March 2019. Resolution 71/318 provides that the Conference is to be convened at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government.

Plenary meetings

6. The Conference will be composed of four plenary meetings, to be held on Wednesday, 20 March, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m. and on Thursday, 21 March, and Friday, 22 March, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

7. At the formal opening of the Conference, on the morning of 20 March, consideration will be given to procedural and organizational matters, namely, the election of the President of the Conference; the adoption of the rules of procedure and the agenda; the election of other officers; the establishment of a Main Committee (if needed); the appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee; and other matters. Statements will be made by the President of the Conference, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and a representative of private sector and civil society organizations.

8. The list of speakers for the general debate will be established on a first-come, first-served basis, under the customary protocol that ensures that Heads of State or Government speak first, to be followed by other heads of delegation. The European Union, in its capacity as observer, will be included in the list of speakers. It is proposed that a time limit of five minutes be established for each statement. The list of speakers will be announced.

9. In addition to the representatives of States participating in the Conference and the representative of the European Union, representatives of the following organizations may, time permitting and without setting a precedent, make a statement during the general debate: (a) intergovernmental organizations and other entities that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the capacity of observer in the sessions and work of the Assembly (rule 60 of the draft provisional rules of procedure); (b) associate members of regional commissions (rule 61); (c) specialized agencies and related organizations (rule 62); (d) other intergovernmental organizations (rule 63); (e) interested United Nations organs (rule 64); and (f) representatives of non-governmental organizations and other organizations and institutions (rule 65).

10. The closing plenary meeting, to be held on the morning of 22 March, is expected to conclude with reporting on the interactive panel discussions and the adoption of the outcome document and the report of the Conference.

Interactive panel discussions

11. The Conference will include three interactive panel discussions, to be scheduled as follows: panel 1, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on 21 March (in parallel with the plenary meeting), and panels 2 and 3, to be held in parallel from 3 to 6 p.m. on 21 March.

12. In accordance with General Assembly decision 72/554, the theme of panel 1 will be "Comparative advantages and opportunities of South-South cooperation and sharing of experiences, best practices and success stories"; the theme of panel 2 will

be "Challenges and the strengthening of the institutional framework of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation"; and the theme of panel 3 will be "Scaling up the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in support of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation".

13. Each panel discussion will have two Co-Chairs to be appointed by the President of the Conference from among the Heads of State or Government, ministers and high-level representatives attending the Conference, including those nominated by the regional groups. Further modalities for the discussions will be shared with Member States through the President of the General Assembly at least one month in advance of the Conference.

Report of the Conference

14. It is recommended that, in accordance with previous practice, the report of the Conference consist of the decisions of the Conference, a brief account of the proceedings and a reportorial account of the work of the Conference and the action taken in plenary meetings.

15. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/318, the Conference is to result in an intergovernmentally agreed outcome and in summaries by the Co-Chairs.

V. Secretariat

16. The responsibilities of the secretariat of the Conference are set out in rules 14 to 16 of the draft provisional rules of procedure. In that context, the Secretary-General of the Conference will serve as the focal point within the Secretariat of the United Nations for providing support for the organization of the Conference, in cooperation with the authorities of the host country.

VI. Action by the General Assembly

17. In order to facilitate and expedite the preparatory work for the Conference, the General Assembly is invited to adopt the following draft decision:

> The General Assembly takes note of the note by the Secretary-General on the organization of work of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation,[1] and decides to recommend the draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference and the provisional agenda of the Conference contained in annexes I and II to the note, respectively, for adoption by the Conference.

[1] A/73/376.

Annex I

Draft provisional rules of procedure for the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation

I. Representation and credentials

Rule 1
Composition of delegations

The delegation of each State participating in the Conference and that of the European Union shall consist of a head of delegation and such other representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

Rule 2
Alternates and advisers

The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

Rule 3
Submission of credentials

The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, if possible, not less than one week before the date fixed for the opening of the Conference. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of the State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or, in the case of the European Union, by the President of the European Commission.

Rule 4
Credentials Committee

A Credentials Committee of nine members shall be appointed at the beginning of the Conference. Its composition shall be based on that of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its seventy-third session. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Conference without delay.

Rule 5
Provisional participation in the Conference

Pending a decision of the Conference on their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the Conference.

II. Officers

Rule 6
Elections

The Conference shall elect from among the representatives of participating States the following officers: a President and nine Vice-Presidents,[1] one of whom shall be designated as Rapporteur-General, an ex officio Vice-President from the host

[1] Two from each of the following groups: African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States and Western European and other States; and one from the Latin American and Caribbean States.

country, as well as a Chair for the Main Committee, if established in accordance with rule 46. The officers shall be elected with a view to ensuring the representative character of the General Committee. The Conference may also elect such other officers as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

Rule 7
General powers of the President

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere by these rules, the President shall preside at the plenary meetings of the Conference, declare the opening and closing of each meeting, direct the discussions, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. The President shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings and over the maintenance of order thereat. The President may propose to the Conference the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times the representative of each participant in the Conference may speak on a question, the adjournment or the closure of the debate and the suspension or the adjournment of a meeting.

2. The President, in exercising the functions of the office, remains under the authority of the Conference.

Rule 8
Acting President

1. If the President is absent from a meeting or any part thereof, she or he shall designate one of the Vice-Presidents to take her or his place.

2. A Vice-President acting as President shall have the same powers and duties as the President.

Rule 9
Replacement of the President

If the President is unable to perform the functions of the office, a new President shall be elected.

Rule 10
Voting rights of the President

The President, or a Vice-President acting as President, shall not vote, but may appoint another member of the same delegation to vote in the place of the President or acting President.

III. General Committee

Rule 11
Composition

The President, the Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur-General and the Chair of the Main Committee shall constitute the General Committee. The President or, in his or her absence, one of the Vice-Presidents designated by him or her, shall serve as Chair of the General Committee. The Chair of the Credentials Committee and other committees established by the Conference in accordance with rule 48 may participate, without the right to vote, in the General Committee.

Rule 12
Substitute members

If the President or a Vice-President of the Conference is to be absent during a meeting of the General Committee, she or he may designate a member of her or his delegation to sit and vote in the Committee. In case of absence, the Chair of the Main Committee shall designate the Vice-Chair of that Committee as her or his substitute. When serving on the General Committee, a Vice-Chair of the Main Committee shall not have the right to vote if she or he is a member of the same delegation as another member of the General Committee.

Rule 13
Functions

The General Committee shall assist the President in the general conduct of the business of the Conference and, subject to the decisions of the Conference, shall ensure the coordination of the work of the Conference.

IV. Secretariat of the Conference

Rule 14
Duties of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations or a designated representative shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary organs.

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations may designate a member of the secretariat to act in his or her place at these meetings.

3. The Secretary-General of the United Nations or a designated representative shall direct the staff required by the Conference.

Rule 15
Duties of the secretariat of the Conference

The secretariat of the Conference shall, in accordance with the present rules:

(a) Provide simultaneous interpretation of speeches made at meetings;

(b) Receive, translate, reproduce and circulate the documents of the Conference;

(c) Publish and circulate the official documents of the Conference;

(d) Prepare and circulate records of public meetings;

(e) Make and arrange for the keeping of sound recordings of meetings;

(f) Arrange for the custody and preservation of the documents of the Conference in the archives of the United Nations;

(g) Generally perform all other work that the Conference may require.

Rule 16
Statements by the Secretariat

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, or any member of the Secretariat designated for that purpose, may, at any time, make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

V. Opening of the Conference

Rule 17
Temporary President

The Secretary-General of the United Nations or, in her or his absence, any member of the Secretariat designated by her or him for that purpose shall open the first meeting of the Conference and preside until the Conference has elected its President.

Rule 18
Decisions concerning organization

The Conference shall, at its first meeting:

(a) Adopt its rules of procedure;

(b) Elect its officers and constitute its subsidiary organs;

(c) Adopt its agenda, the draft of which shall, until such adoption, be the provisional agenda of the Conference;

(d) Decide on the organization of its work.

VI. Conduct of business

Rule 19
Quorum

The President may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the States participating in the Conference are present. The presence of a majority of the States so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.

Rule 20
Speeches

1. No representative may address the Conference without having previously obtained the permission of the President. Subject to rules 21, 22 and 24 to 27, the President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they indicate their desire to speak. The secretariat shall be in charge of drawing up a list of speakers.

2. Debate shall be confined to the question before the Conference, and the President may call speakers to order if their remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

3. The Conference may limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each participant may speak on any question. Permission to speak on a motion to set such limits shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour of and two opposing such limits, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. In any event, with the consent of the Conference, the President shall limit each intervention on procedural matters to five minutes. When the debate is limited and speakers exceed the allotted time, the President shall call them to order without delay.

Rule 21
Points of order

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance

with the present rules. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the States present and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Rule 22
Precedence

The Chair or the Rapporteur of the Main Committee, or the representative of a subcommittee or working group, may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions arrived at by the body concerned.

Rule 23
Closing of the list of speakers

During the course of a debate, the President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Conference, declare the list closed.

Rule 24
Right of reply

1. Notwithstanding rule 23, the President shall accord the right of reply to a representative of any State participating in the Conference or of the European Union who requests it. Any other representative may be granted the opportunity to make a reply.

2. The statements made under the present rule shall normally be made at the end of the last meeting of the day, or at the conclusion of the consideration of the relevant item if that is sooner.

3. Representatives of a State or of the European Union may make no more than two statements under the present rule at a given meeting on any item. The first shall be limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes; representatives shall, in any event, attempt to be as brief as possible.

Rule 25
Adjournment of debate

A representative of any State participating in the Conference may at any time move the adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour and to two opposing the adjournment, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 26
Closure of debate

A representative of any State participating in the Conference may at any time move the closure of the debate on the question under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified a wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives opposing the closure, after which the motion shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 27
Suspension or adjournment of the meeting

Subject to rule 38, a representative of any State participating in the Conference may at any time move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. No

discussion on such motions shall be permitted and they shall, subject to rule 28, be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 28
Order of motions

The motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all proposals or other motions before the meeting:

(a) To suspend the meeting;

(b) To adjourn the meeting;

(c) To adjourn the debate on the question under discussion;

(d) To close the debate on the question under discussion.

Rule 29
Submission of proposals and substantive amendments

Proposals and substantive amendments shall normally be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General or a designated representative, who shall circulate copies to all delegations in the languages of the Conference. Unless the Conference decides otherwise, substantive proposals shall be discussed or put to a decision no earlier than 24 hours after copies have been circulated to all delegations. The President may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments, even though those amendments have not been circulated or have been circulated only the same day.

Rule 30
Withdrawal of proposals and motions

A proposal or a motion may be withdrawn by its sponsor at any time before a decision on it has been taken, provided that it has not been amended. A proposal or a motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any representative.

Rule 31
Decisions on competence

Subject to rule 28, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Conference to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

Rule 32
Reconsideration of proposals

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered unless the Conference, by a two-thirds majority of the States present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded to only two speakers opposing reconsideration, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote.

VII. Decision-making

Rule 33
General agreement

1. The Conference shall make its best endeavours to ensure that the work of the Conference is accomplished by general agreement (consensus).

2. Notwithstanding any measures that may be taken in compliance with paragraph 1 above, a proposal before the Conference shall be voted on if a representative of any State participating in the Conference so requests.

Rule 34
Voting rights

Each State participating in the Conference shall have one vote.

Rule 35
Majority required

1. Subject to rule 33, decisions of the Conference on all matters of substance shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the States present and voting.

2. Except as otherwise provided in the present rules, decisions of the Conference on all matters of procedure shall be taken by a majority of the States present and voting.

3. If the question arises whether a matter is one of procedure or of substance, the President of the Conference shall rule on the question. An appeal against that ruling shall be immediately put to the vote, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the States present and voting.

4. If a vote is equally divided, the proposal or motion shall be regarded as rejected.

Rule 36
Meaning of the phrase "States present and voting"

For the purpose of the present rules, the phrase "States present and voting" means States casting an affirmative or negative vote. States which abstain from voting shall be regarded as not voting.

Rule 37
Method of voting

1. Except as provided in rule 44, the Conference may vote by show of hands, except that a representative may request a roll call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the States participating in the Conference, beginning with the delegation whose name is drawn by lot by the President. The name of each State shall be called in all roll calls, and its representative shall reply "yes", "no" or "abstention".

2. When the Conference votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of hands and a recorded vote shall replace a roll call. A representative may request a recorded vote, which shall, unless a representative requests otherwise, be taken without calling out the names of the States participating in the Conference.

3. The vote of each State participating in a roll-call or a recorded vote shall be inserted in any record of or report on the Conference.

Rule 38
Conduct during voting

After the President has announced the commencement of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting, except on a point of order in connection with the process of voting.

Rule 39
Explanation of vote

1. Representatives may make brief statements, consisting solely of explanations of vote, before the voting has commenced or after the voting has been completed. The

President may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations. The representative of a State sponsoring a proposal or motion shall not speak in explanation of vote thereon, except if it has been amended.

2. When the same matter is considered successively in several organs of the Conference, a State should, as far as possible, explain its vote only in one such organ, unless its vote in one organ is different from that in another organ.

Rule 40
Division of proposals

A representative may move that parts of a proposal be decided on separately. If a representative objects, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded to only two representatives in favour of and to two opposing the division. If the motion is carried, those parts of the proposal that are subsequently approved shall be put to the Conference for decision as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal have been rejected, the proposal shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Rule 41
Amendments

A proposal is considered an amendment to another proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal. Unless specified otherwise, the word "proposal" in these rules shall be regarded as including amendments.

Rule 42
Order of voting on amendments

When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Conference shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom, and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter shall not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

Rule 43
Order of voting on proposals

1. If two or more proposals, other than amendments, relate to the same question, they shall, unless the Conference decides otherwise, be voted on in the order in which they were submitted. The Conference may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

2. Revised proposals shall be voted on in the order in which the original proposals were submitted, unless the revision substantially departs from the original proposal. In that case, the original proposal shall be regarded as withdrawn and the revised proposal shall be treated as a new proposal.

3. A motion requiring that no decision be taken on a proposal shall be put to the vote before a decision is taken on the proposal in question.

Rule 44
Elections

All elections shall be held by secret ballot unless, in the absence of any objection, the Conference decides to proceed without taking a ballot when there is an agreed candidate or slate of candidates.

Rule 45
Balloting

1. When one or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast and the largest number of votes shall be elected.

2. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of places to be filled, additional ballots shall be held to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates obtaining the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled.

VIII. Subsidiary organs

Rule 46
Main Committee

The Conference may establish a Main Committee.

Rule 47
Representation on the Main Committee

Each State participating in the Conference and the European Union may be represented by one representative on the Main Committee established by the Conference. They may assign to the Committee such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required.

Rule 48
Other committees and working groups

1. In addition to the Main Committee referred to above, the Conference may establish such committees and working groups as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

2. Subject to the decision of the plenary of the Conference, the Main Committee may set up subcommittees and working groups.

Rule 49
Members of committees, subcommittees and working groups

1. The members of the committees and working groups of the Conference, referred to in rule 48, paragraph 1, shall be appointed by the President, subject to the approval of the Conference, unless the Conference decides otherwise.

2. Members of the subcommittees and working groups of committees shall be appointed by the Chair of the committee in question, subject to the approval of that committee, unless the committee decides otherwise.

Rule 50
Officers

Except as otherwise provided in rule 6, each committee, subcommittee and working group shall elect its own officers.

Rule 51
Quorum

1. The Chair of the Main Committee may declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one quarter of the States participating in the Conference are present. The presence of a majority of the States so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.

2. A majority of the members of the General Committee or the Credentials Committee or of any committee, subcommittee or working group shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 52
Officers, conduct of business and voting

The rules contained in sections II, VI (except rule 19) and VII above shall be applicable, mutatis mutandis, to the proceedings of committees, subcommittees and working groups, except that:

(a) The Chairs of the General Committee and the Credentials Committee and the Chairs of the committees, subcommittees and working groups may exercise the right to vote, provided that they are representatives of participating States;

(b) Decisions of committees, subcommittees and working groups shall be taken by a majority of the members present and voting, except that the reconsideration of a proposal or an amendment shall require the majority established by rule 32.

IX. Languages and records

Rule 53
Languages of the Conference

Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the languages of the Conference.

Rule 54
Interpretation

1. Speeches made in a language of the Conference shall be interpreted into the other five languages.

2. A representative may speak in a language other than a language of the Conference if the delegation concerned provides for interpretation into one of the languages of the Conference.

Rule 55
Languages of official documents

Official documents of the Conference shall be made available in the languages of the Conference.

Rule 56
Sound recordings of meetings

Sound recordings of the plenary meetings of the Conference and of the meetings of the Main Committee shall be made and kept in accordance with the practice of the United Nations. Unless otherwise decided by the Conference or the Main Committee, no such recordings shall be made of any of the other meetings of the Conference.

X. Public and private meetings

General principles

Rule 57

The plenary meetings of the Conference and the meetings of any committee shall be held in public unless the body concerned decides otherwise. All decisions taken by the plenary of the Conference at a private meeting shall be announced at an early public meeting of the plenary.

Rule 58

As a general rule, meetings of the General Committee, Credentials Committee, subcommittees or working groups shall be held in private.

Rule 59
Communiqués on private meetings

At the close of a private meeting, the presiding officer of the organ concerned may issue a communiqué through the Secretary-General of the United Nations or a designated representative.

XI. Other participants and observers

Rule 60
Intergovernmental organizations and other entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly

Representatives designated by intergovernmental organizations and other entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly have the right to participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group.

Rule 61
Associate members of regional commissions[2]

Representatives designated by the associate members of regional commissions listed in the footnote below may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group.

[2] American Samoa, Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Curaçao, French Polynesia, Guadeloupe, Guam, Martinique, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Puerto Rico, Sint Maarten, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands.

Rule 62
Representatives of the specialized agencies and related organizations[1]

Representatives designated by the specialized agencies and related organizations may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Rule 63
Representatives of other intergovernmental organizations

Save where otherwise specifically provided with respect to the European Union in these rules of procedure, representatives designated by other intergovernmental organizations invited to the Conference may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Rule 64
Representatives of interested United Nations organs

Representatives designated by interested organs of the United Nations may participate as observers, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, the Main Committee and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group on questions within the scope of their activities.

Rule 65
Representatives of non-governmental organizations

1. Non-governmental organizations and representatives of other organizations or institutions accredited to participate in the Conference in accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 71/318 may designate representatives to attend public meetings of the Conference and the Main Committee as observers.

2. Upon the invitation of the presiding officer of the Conference and subject to the approval of the Conference, such observers may make oral statements on questions in which they have special competence. If the number of requests to speak is too large, the non-governmental organizations shall be requested to form themselves into constituencies, such constituencies to speak through spokespersons.

Rule 66
Written statements

Written statements submitted by the designated representatives referred to in rules 60 to 65 shall be circulated by the secretariat to all delegations in the quantities and the languages in which the statements are made available to it at the site of the Conference, provided that a statement submitted on behalf of a non-governmental organization must be related to the work of the Conference and be on a subject in which the organization has a special competence. Written statements shall not be made available at United Nations expense and shall not be issued as official documents.

[1] For the purpose of the present rules, the term "related organizations" includes the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Criminal Court, the International Organization for Migration, the International Seabed Authority, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the World Trade Organization.

XII. Suspension and amendment of the rules of procedure

Rule 67
Method of suspension

Any of these rules may be suspended by the Conference provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given, which may be waived if no representative objects. Any such suspension shall be limited to a specific and stated purpose and to a period required to achieve that purpose.

Rule 68
Method of amendment

These rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the Conference taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, after the General Committee has reported on the proposed amendment.

Annex II

Draft provisional agenda of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Election of the President.
3. Adoption of the rules of procedure.
4. Adoption of the agenda.
5. Election of officers other than the President.
6. Organization of work.
7. Credentials of representatives to the Conference:
   (a) Appointment of members of the Credentials Committee;
   (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.
8. General debate on the role of South-South cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: challenges and opportunities.
9. Interactive panel discussions:
   (a) Panel 1: comparative advantages and opportunities of South-South cooperation and sharing of experiences, best practices and success stories;
   (b) Panel 2: challenges and the strengthening of the institutional framework of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation;
   (c) Panel 3: scaling up the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in support of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation;
   (d) Summaries by the Co-Chairs.
10. Adoption of the outcome document of the Conference.
11. Adoption of the report of the Conference.
12. Closing of the Conference.

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Joint Inspection Unit

Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to draw the attention of the members of the General Assembly to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled, "Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system", which is available under the symbol JIU/REP/2018/1.

* A/73/150.

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Joint Inspection Unit

Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system" (see A/73/377).

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Summary

In its report entitled "Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system" (see A/73/377), the Joint Inspection Unit addresses the role of internship programmes in the United Nations system. The review covers the period between 2009 and 2017, and is a follow-up to the previous work of the Unit on this subject (JIU/NOTE/2009/2).

The present note reflects the views of organizations of the United Nations system on the recommendations provided in the report. The views have been consolidated on the basis of inputs provided by member organizations of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, which welcomed the report and supported some of its conclusions.

I. Introduction

1. In the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system" (see A/73/377)[1] the Joint Inspection Unit addresses the role of internship programmes as part of the ongoing reform of human resources management in the United Nations system. The review covers from 2009 to 2017, during which period the size of internship programmes in the United Nations system grew significantly. It is a follow-up to the previous work of the Joint Inspection Unit on this subject (JIU/NOTE/2009/2).

II. General comments

2. Organizations of the United Nations system welcome the report of the Joint Inspection Unit and its findings and support initiatives to reform the internship programmes in the United Nations system. Organizations are in agreement with the Inspector's view that "a convergence of modalities should not be a race to the bottom that involves adopting the lowest possible standards. On the contrary, a system-wide reform of internships should be aligned to good practices as identified in different organizations of the United Nations system and in other comparators. Coherence across the system should not jeopardize good progress in some organizations" (JIU/REP/2018/1, para. 110). Along those lines, organizations underscore the importance of retaining their ability to design internship policies that meet their respective needs and suit their context.

3. Organizations note that the implementation of the proposed recommendations, including the benchmarks, would differ in each organization and that, in some cases, additional time and resources would be required for triggering internal coordination mechanisms, as well as obtaining approval from the respective legislative bodies for those recommendations with budgetary implications.

4. Several organizations express concern regarding elements of the proposed benchmark framework for good practices in internships programmes, finding some of the benchmarks overly specific and prescriptive or that they raise liability or other concerns. More details on these concerns are provided in the context of organizations' comments on recommendations 2 and 3.

5. Organizations report having followed up on the recommendations contained in the previous report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/NOTE/2009/2) and having undertaken significant reforms on internship policies, including giving due consideration to the findings and recommendations of the report currently under consideration (JIU/REP/2018/1) as they keep updating their internship programmes.

6. Some organizations express doubts about setting up one centrally managed internship programme for the whole of the United Nations system (as would appear to be suggested in JIU/REP/2018/1, para. 113), including the option to have it managed by United Nations Volunteers, and find that they would be better served managing their own internship programmes, or that they would need to be presented with a more detailed costs and risks/benefits analysis for the proposed centralized approach.

7. With regard to paragraph 32 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, the new internship policy mentioned was established by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and not the Office of the United Nations High

[1] The report of the Joint Inspection Unit is available under the symbol JIU/REP/2018/1.

Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Unit may wish to consider issuing a corrigendum.

III. Comments on specific recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Secretary-General should launch a reform of the United Nations internship programme, taking into account the benchmarking framework for good practices in internship programmes proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report JIU/REP/2018/1, and report on progress made to the General Assembly at its next session under the agenda item on human resources.

8. Several organizations have already revamped or reformed their internship programmes or are in the process of doing so, including taking into consideration the most recent report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the topic.

9. Organizations express reservations about agreeing to all the elements of the proposed benchmark framework and recognize that a comprehensive reform of the internship programme would require proper coordination and consultation within the framework of the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination or alternatively, as suggested in the recommendation, an executive decision by the Secretary-General.

Recommendation 2

Executive heads of the United Nations system organizations, under the leadership of the Secretary-General as the chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, should work together towards the establishment of more coherent internship programmes for the United Nations system, taking into account the benchmarking framework for good practices in internship programmes.

10. Organizations welcome the suggestion to introduce a more coherent internship programmes system that would foster the harmonization of good practices (as outlined in JIU/REP/2018/1, para. 110) across the United Nations system. The Secretariat further notes that the proposed recommendation could be implemented within the scope of the comprehensive reform initiative under way.

11. As for the implementation of the suggested benchmarks, organizations support adapting them to their needs and context in the light of the assessed costs and benefits. However, several organizations have reservations about numerous elements of the proposed benchmarking framework, including some of their potential financial implications. Some specific examples include: (a) benchmark 1 on real-time updates to candidates on the status of their internship applications is considered cost-prohibitive given the amount of manual intervention that would be required for a high volume of applications; (b) benchmark 2 on selection criteria is perceived to be overly specific and prescriptive, and organizations query whether it is possible to define a set of qualifications that are common to all system organizations; (c) regarding benchmark 3 on administrative support, organizations would need additional resources to modify current administrative processes; (d) benchmark 7 on leave entitlements also raises concerns as several organizations refer to current arrangements as being effective; (e) regarding benchmark 8 on hosting conditions, organizations are keen to retain flexibility to assign space based on available resources; (f) benchmark 9 on interns' travel is in several cases not aligned with organizations' travel policies; and (g) benchmark 13 on work experience is antithetical to several organizational practices on how to account for the internship

experience. While some organizations welcome benchmark 16 on eliminating the mandatory break in service, others suggest that further analysis should be undertaken as interns would not normally have the years of experience required to be recruited directly from their internships into professional positions. They note that the implementation of this benchmark might also impede recruitment for the young professionals programme and the Junior Professional Officers programme and have possible legal implications with respect to the continuity of service.

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of the Joint Inspection Unit participating organizations should consider updating their internship policies, taking into account the proposed Joint Inspection Unit benchmarking framework for good practices in internship programmes and identifying those benchmarks to be streamlined in the policies of their respective organizations.

12. Organizations support this recommendation and underscore the importance for each entity to consider the appropriateness to their needs and context, as well assessing the costs and benefits, when implementing the suggested benchmarks.

13. As indicated in their comments to recommendation 2, organizations have mixed views and reservations about elements of the proposed benchmarking framework for good practices.

Recommendation 4

The General Assembly should request the United Nations Secretariat to update the human resources framework to include a category for interns, who should not be classified under "type I: gratis personnel", thus facilitating the consideration of the introduction of compensation schemes, and to report to General Assembly at its next session under the agenda item on human resources.

14. The recommendation is addressed to the General Assembly. Organizations note that this recommendation contains the underlying key change in the recommended overall internship reform initiative, as all other recommendations in this Joint Inspection Unit review will be dependent upon it. In the Secretariat, the implementation of this recommendation would require the creation of a new category of non-staff personnel with some specific conditions of service, such as compensation, annual leave, the possibility of undertaking official business travel and the possibility of benefiting from human resources-related travel (i.e. from the place of "recruitment" to the duty station).

15. The consideration of this recommendation would further require system-wide consultations in the framework of the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. Organizations further note that the introduction of a new category of personnel for interns may also have budget implications, which would have to be approved by the General Assembly.

16. Lastly, organizations note that the proposed change should not mandate a compensation regime for interns, which might be unfeasible from a budgetary standpoint and would require the approval of their respective legislative/governing bodies.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of the Joint Inspection Unit participating organizations should put in place a mechanism to systematically track information related to internships, including on gender, country of origin, university from which the highest diploma was received, duration of the internship for each intern engaged

and related costs (direct and indirect) generated by the internship programme. A report should be presented for information to the governing and/or legislative bodies of the organizations at their next sessions.

17. Organizations partially support this recommendation. While numerous entities already record and collect most or all of the information listed and stand ready to submit it to their legislative/governing bodies, if requested, others note that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit does not present a sound business case for the investment that would be required in the proposed mechanism, nor does it clarify what would be the expected value and results of reporting to the legislative/governing bodies. Organizations suggest assessing further the feasibility, costs and benefits of preparing and presenting such a report.

18. Basic information on internships is currently presented to the General Assembly in the biennial reports of the Secretary-General entitled "Composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retired staff and consultants and individual contractors".

Recommendation 6

Legislative and/or governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system should consider approving the establishment of ad hoc multi-donor trust funds to pledge voluntary contributions to support internship schemes and request executive heads to present for their consideration proposals for other suitable innovative mechanisms to receive voluntary contributions, with no strings attached regarding selection criteria.

19. Organizations, while noting that the recommendation is addressed to their legislative/governing bodies, support measures that would allow the United Nations system organizations to compensate interns. However, some organizations, in particular those that are voluntarily funded, express reservations about the establishment of a dedicated trust fund to support internship schemes and would prefer the use of standard funding arrangements through voluntary contributions. These reservations are also informed by the preferences of member States, for example, in the case of the World Health Organization, the preference is to remain open to using all sources of funding to support interns, including flexible voluntary contributions.

20. Organizations note that while the establishment of a trust fund can be explored, this should be done taking into consideration recommendation 4 on the introduction of a new category of personnel for interns and the proposed framework for a possible compensation scheme and related costs.

21. Lastly, some organizations observe the tendency of donors to focus on programmatic elements rather than administrative ones, such as an internship programme. This approach does not recognize the capacity-building purpose of internships that incorporate both elements.

Recommendation 7

Executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system should establish a collaboration mechanism between the public information services of the organizations and the permanent representatives of Member States to facilitate outreach to their capitals on a worldwide basis so as to attract young candidates for internships from diverse educational backgrounds from all recognized educational entities, based on the *World Guide to Higher Education* published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

22. Organizations generally support this recommendation, even though some find it limiting, as many are already engaged in promoting internship programmes to member States and other relevant stakeholders, including youth at national universities and regional educational hubs and parliamentarians. Organizations support measures that would lead to greater diversity and inclusion in internship programmes, although some underscore the need for additional resources to meet the administrative burden that this might entail.

23. Some organizations support the basic premise that interns should preferably be recruited locally and express the preference to conduct local outreach directly with local educational institutions based on the needs of their respective offices through the country office. This option needs to be framed in the context of a clear policy distinguishing the parameters for locally and internationally recruited interns.